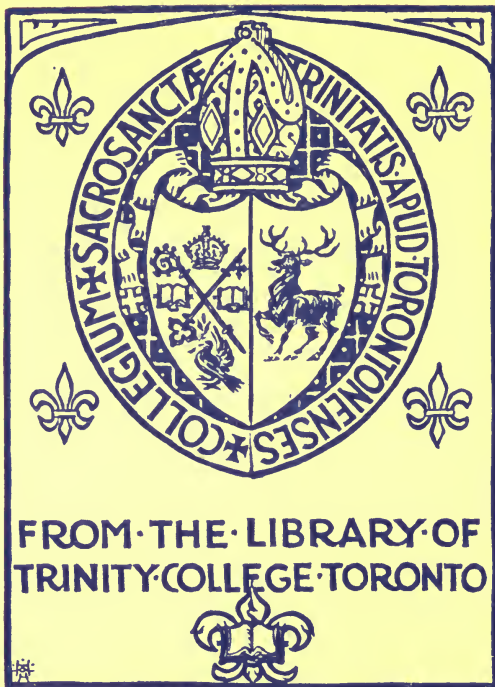


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The Christian Life
According to the
Prayer Book

Printed in Canada
Thorn Press, Toronto

THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE
according to the Prayer Book

by

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The quotations which stand at the beginning of each chapter are from the writings of Frederick Denison Maurice, one of our great Anglican prophets. All the quotations except the first are from the two-volume edition of "The Kingdom of Christ", published by J. M. Dent & Co. in the Everyman's Library. Unfortunately, it is now out of print.

FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure for me to write the foreword to this year's Lenten book by the Right Reverend Howard H. Clark, Bishop of Edmonton.

I have followed his career with great interest from the time he was made Deacon and ordained Priest by the late Archbishop Roper. I had the privilege of preaching the sermon on each occasion. Over the years I learned to appreciate his devoted spiritual life and the natural gift of teaching possessed by him.

We have many books of devotion today, but we are grateful to the Bishop for reminding us of our great spiritual heritage in the beauty and simplicity of the Book of Common Prayer. It is difficult to emphasize any part of this book, yet one cannot fail to sense the Spiritual in the handling of such subjects as discipline, the place of the Bible in our spiritual life, and the devoted presentation of the Church's great Service of Holy Communion. Indeed the book gives a bird's eye view of the Prayer Book, which will be useful to all Church people who realize its value as a Lenten Book.

If we follow his line of teaching the devotion of the Lenten Season will be enhanced, and this will result in a deeper appreciation of the joys of Easter Day.

ROBERT JEFFERSON

. . . the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living.

The Preface "Of Ceremonies"

Introduction to the Book of Common

To those who understand the Prayers of the Church best, the sufferers on sickbeds; to those who often feel the need of them most, men toiling in the daily business of the world; to those who turn from them with the greatest aversion, persons harassed by doubts and confusions which seem to be mocked by their tone of calmness and trust; these Sermons are affectionately dedicated, by one who has learnt more of the inner meaning of the Prayer Book from the first class than from all instructions of divines; who never appreciated its practical substantial character till he felt that the callings of the second class were as sacred as those of the recluse and the devotee; and who by converse with the last, by experiencing their difficulties, by seeking to sympathize with them, by discovering his own incompetency to help them, has been led to know what guidance and help there is in it for such as have never found or expect to find a home in any religious party (or) rest in any religious theory.

The Dedication in Frederick Denison Maurice's Sermons on "The Prayer Book".

1

INTRODUCTION

A FEW months ago I received a letter from an earnest Church member about the call to Intensified Evangelism which came from our General Synod of 1955. This correspondent seemed to be at once delighted and skeptical — delighted because she felt that here was evidence that her Church is awakening to its fundamental mission, and skeptical because she could not quite believe that official Anglicanism is capable of effective evangelism.

In the course of her letter she commented on some remarks of mine in the "Edmonton Churchman."

"My mother," she wrote, "was brought up as a Methodist but became Anglican when she married. The following sentence in your statement covers what she said to me, — 'We know that the Christian life may be a growth, with often no supreme moment of conscious decision,

no experience other than Baptism which can be described as "being born again,"'. I accepted her opinion and went along growing (?) until I was fifty-four. Regularly I joined in the General Confession but never thought about any specific sins.

"The Oxford Group awakened me to reality in my spiritual life and when I faced myself in the light of the four absolute moral principles that Christ taught — Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love, I realized what a sinner I was and how much I needed forgiveness. For the first time I was really repentant. There was certainly a time of decision and spiritual re-birth in my mind and heart.

"Thousands of sermons and church services had not taught me honestly to face myself and sincerely say 'Thy will, not mine, be done' . . .".

The letter, I have suggested, had been written with mixed emotions and I found myself reading it with mixed emotions. On the one hand there could be nothing but sympathy with an honest and moving account of genuine religious experience. I knew very well that it is possible to take part in public worship with some sincerity of intention and yet with an unawakened faith. Others beside my correspondent have been in the

Church and faithful in their religious duties without it resulting in a living experience of Christ. Others, like her, have awakened to him only when they went outside of the regular life of their Church.

Indeed, most of the evangelical sects believe that our Church is full of the unconverted and that our Prayer Book worship is dead because it is offered without real faith. They believe that we are doomed to say,

“The form of godliness was mine;
The power I never knew.”

It was just this criticism, which while not openly expressed in the letter, seemed to be implicit in some of its statements, that aroused a silent protest in me as I read. Why had the Prayer Book been a dead book to her? Why had she so completely missed what it says about repentance? Why did she need to go to an undenominational Christian group, when all that is true in its teaching has been proclaimed by her Church in its worship through the centuries?

For to worship God in the Prayer Book way demands a costing faith in Jesus Christ, a lively repentance for sin, a humble and thankful acceptance of forgiveness, a sober determination to live according to God's Commandments, and a sure

trust in his power to show us the way. If we really use our Prayer Books we are committed to a way of life that, from the cradle to the grave, is distinctively and triumphantly Christian. There is no need for an adult experience of conversion unless we stray completely from that way, for from childhood we have been living our thanks to our heavenly Father "that he has called me to this state of salvation."

Thus that friendly letter provoked the thoughts with which this book began to take form. It is a book about the Prayer Book, but in a special sense. There are many excellent historical and liturgical studies of the Prayer Book. I have not attempted to cover the ground that they cover. My purpose in these pages is to set forth the Prayer Book's plan for the Christian life, to describe Christian's journey through this world if he follows the Prayer Book Way.

Such a book must be needed if earnest folk like my correspondent have not found this way to be for them the journey to the heart of God. I shall not ignore their experiences; indeed we shall need to enquire into the reasons for such an experience and to suggest how it can be avoided. Yet we must always remember that such experiences do not necessarily condemn the Prayer Book or the

worship it directs. Chesterton once said something like this: "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not been tried." I would urge that the Prayer Book Way has not been tried and found wanting; some have never really understood it and therefore have not tried it.

For against every experience like my correspondent's must be set that of the true Prayer Book Christians — the faithful in every congregation who glorify God by their quiet, devoted Christian lives. They are "stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity." These are the true Anglicans. Many of them would be surprised to hear that there is anything specifically Anglican in their manner of following Christ; yet they are Christians of a distinctive type, recognizably different from the faithful Christian of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Reformed traditions.

I do not set forth this Prayer Book Way as the only road to Paradise. Bishop Brent once said that "Christ's agile feet journey to the human soul along many and diverse paths," and our journey home to him may also have its alternative routes. This is simply the way we are called to follow when we are found of God in the Anglican Communion — and a good way it is.

Continuing ever stable and strong in Christ.

The Making of Deacons.

Book of Common Prayer.

. . . The discoveries which were made in the last supper when, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end, — . . . the announcements that they were all united in Him, as the branch is united to the vine, that there was a still more wonderful union between Him and His Father, to the knowledge of which they might through this union attain, and that a Spirit would come to dwell with them and to testify of Him and of the Father. All which discourses to men are gathered up in the amazing prayer, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they may be one in Us."

The Kingdom of Christ Vol. I Pages 253-4

2

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

“CHRISTIANITY” says Theodore Ferris, “is a company of all sorts and conditions of men and women who have come under the influence of Jesus”. This definition may be over simplified, but it does seize on the essential point. It is the influence of Jesus, his authority, his redeeming work, his continuing presence, that matters for the Christian above all else.

Therefore, before we begin to describe in more detail the Prayer Book Way, we may pause for a question. Is it a way that is truly “through Jesus Christ our Lord”? Following this way shall we be “made like unto him”?

I

The briefest glance at the Prayer Book will reveal little of that familiar talk about Jesus which

is a feature of many hymns and of the sermons of the "Gospel preacher". There is clearly a difference in tone when we turn from the Prayer Book to such a hymn as John Newton's, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." The reason for this is that the Prayer Book follows the traditional pattern of Christian prayer; it is "the crystalized devotion of the saints". And through the ages, Christians have usually prayed *to* the Father, *through* the Son, *in* the Spirit.

You do not find many prayers of the early Church addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ. There are, of course, exceptions, like the New Testament prayer, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Normally, however, the Church follows the pattern of prayer that was given to us by our Lord. "When ye pray, say, 'Our Father . . .'" (Luke 11:2).

The majesty and the holiness of God and the many-sided character of his revelation of himself must ever be in our worship. There is a kind of "Jesus-worship" which in the Psalmist's language "limits" God, makes him too small in our thoughts. It is good for us to know Jesus as our "Shepherd, Brother, Friend" as long as we do not forget that he is also our "Prophet, Priest, and King". For one of the great miracles of the

Gospel, some would say the chief, is that he whom we know and love by the human name of Jesus is himself Very God, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity".

Therefore in the Prayer Book, the prayers are Trinitarian. The full revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit — that great mystery which is yet the actual experience of the Christian — is ever before us.

But in that revelation Jesus Christ is central. In him God makes fully known all of himself that is partially revealed in Nature and in the rest of History. When a man comes to know Jesus truly, he has found God; he does not need to go beyond him. Knowing Christ, his experience expands into an apprehension of the fulness of God as far as we finite creatures may know him. Thus, the Christian Faith is Christ-centred, and if the Prayer Book is a true guide it must reveal to us this centrality of Christ.

Then consider the Prayer Book. At Baptism the child is signed with the cross, with the prayer that he may "continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." The godparents are reminded that the child is henceforth committed to the Christian profession, "which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to

be made like unto him.” In the Catechism, the child is instructed that the first consequence of his entrance into the Baptismal Covenant was that he was made “a member of Christ”.

When men are made Deacons in the Church of God they are asked this question: “Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your lives, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?” When a man is ordained priest, he is reminded solemnly “how great a treasure” are the people who are committed to his charge, “for they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and for whom he shed his blood. The Church and Congregation whom you must serve, is his spouse and body.” When a bishop is consecrated, there is a touching echo of the Gospels when he is required to promise that he will show himself “gentle, and be merciful for Christ’s sake to poor and needy people, and to all strangers destitute of help.”

II

The Prayer Book keeps us close to Jesus Christ in another way also. Its worship, as we shall notice in more detail later on is organized around

the Christian Year. This Christian Year is really the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ broken up into instalments, from the Father's preparation for his Coming to his Birth and Death and Resurrection, and then to the life that flows from his life. Thus the worshipper cannot forget Jesus Christ. Sunday by Sunday he hears "the old, old story of Jesus and his love".

III

There is a Christ-centred feature of our prayers which we are in danger of treating as mere convention. At the end of any prayer we say, "through Jesus Christ our Lord". These familiar words are the expression of a great truth about Christian prayer: we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace" because "we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God" (Hebrews 4:14-16). The Christian knows that by himself he could never reach the presence of God. He knows his own sinfulness and its effect. Precisely because God is Love, he could not be content with us as we are; true love always demands the best of the loved one. Therefore Jesus Christ came to die for our sins and to do for our humanity what we could not do for ourselves, making his human life an offering of perfect obedience to his heavenly Father. The heart of

God is satisfied when he sees our human nature perfected in Jesus Christ. We are “accepted in the beloved”.

All this is behind the familiar ending to our prayers. Every time we say “through Jesus Christ our Lord” we are saying what the hymn says, —

“Look, Father, look on his anointed face,
And only look on us as found in him.”

IV

There is one supreme way in which the Prayer Book seeks to guarantee that our lives shall be Christ-centred. It provides that on Sundays and Holy Days, we may come to the chief of all Christian Services, the Holy Communion.

The importance of the Holy Communion Service is shown by its position in the Prayer Book. This is not so obvious in our Canadian Prayer Book, because in that book a number of special Services have been added at the end. In the older prayer books, however, the Communion came almost in the centre, where the book most easily opened. Other considerations may lead us to change this arrangement in our new Prayer Book, but the old position witnessed to our Church’s desire to keep our lives and our worship Christ-centred.

How better could this be done by taking as the chief act of Christian worship the Service that Christ himself gave us? Whatever else the Holy Communion may mean (and it is rich in meaning) it is an act of obedience and an act of remembrance. We do what he told us to do, and as we break the Bread and bless the Cup, we remember him.

We remember him, and as we do this, he is with us. "That we may evermore dwell in him and he in us" — that is the Christian life. He is both the road we travel and the goal we seek. For unless we journey with him we are lost, and walking with him is the only way to find him, who is the end of all our desires.

Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this Child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this Child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.

The Public Baptism of Infants.

We baptize children, not because they are children, but because they are embryo men; . . . Baptism is not a momentary act but a perpetual sacrament.

The Kingdom of Christ II, 271.

3

ACCORDING TO THIS BEGINNING

I

THE Christian life, according to the Prayer Book, cannot begin too soon. "The minister of the Parish shall often admonish the people that they bring their children to baptism as soon as possible after birth, not later than the fourth or at the furthest the fifth Sunday, unless upon a great and reasonable cause." This, the first Rubric in our Canadian Service of Holy Baptism, may seem to most parents to call for baptism at an inconveniently early date. Yet it is a relaxation of the English rule, which calls for baptism on the first or second Sunday after the child's birth, and in the First Prayer Book of 1549 the people were admonished "that they defer not the baptism of infants any longer than the Sunday or Holy Day next after the child is born."

Thus in those days few mothers witnessed the

baptism of their children; their first appearance in Church was for their “churching”. And this early date for baptism was advisable in a time when mortality was high.

But behind it there was another consideration. It showed the great desire of the Church that *from the first* a child should be taken from the Way of Death, which is his natural inheritance as the son of sinful humanity, and be placed upon the Way of Life which has been opened for us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every child enters into a contradictory inheritance. He was born that he might become the child of God. Every birth is a sign of God’s continuing love and hope for mankind. There is no such thing as an “unwanted child”. His birth may be an inconvenient accident to his parents, or a personal tragedy to his unmarried mother, but in the court of heaven there is joy because the creative love of God still sends new souls into this world. And each child who is born is one of the souls for whom Christ died, one of those of whom God has said, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.”

That child, however, enters also into another inheritance. The opening words of the Service of Baptism tell us that “all men are conceived and

born in sin.” These words are easily misunderstood today. A happy young couple, proudly bringing to Church their first-born, the fruit of their love and the answer to their prayers, may feel that these words suggest that the act of procreation is sinful in itself, and that in loving each other they have done something which the Church condemns.

Of course, that is not the meaning of the words. They refer to a deeper, more all-pervading sinfulness which is the heritage of the human race, so that even our noblest and most loving actions are not free from it. They refer to “the fault and corruption of the nature of every man” which is called in theology “original sin”. It is that twist in our natures which makes us rely on ourselves when our only blessedness is to trust in God, and it can and does infect even our best with the fatal disease of pride and self-will.

The Church knows this contradictory inheritance of every child. His parents, if they are instructed, know it also. He is born to be a son of God, yet if he is left to develop in the world’s way he will become a son of perdition. Therefore, at the very beginning of his life, they claim for him what Christ has won for him. He is brought to Church. He is adopted into that brotherhood

of which the Lord is the Head. He is endued with that Holy Spirit which Christ promised to those who become his disciples. He has been born into the natural world with its reign of self-will; now he is reborn into the Kingdom of Christ.

So, by the simple effectual sign which Christ gave us the blessing is bestowed. He is baptized with water. He is given the name which proclaims him the child of God. "N., I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

II

Is this all there is to it? Is so great a destiny won by so easy an act? Yes, and no.

First, it was not easy. It is possible only because of the bitter pains and the lonely death of our Saviour. If he had not died and risen again, there would be no baptism nor any of the blessings it confers.

And further, one of the greatest arguments for infant baptism is just this, that an infant is incapable of deserving in any way this great privilege. If we are baptized in later years, we can and are required to offer that repentance and faith which in the New Testament are linked with baptism as the way of entering into salvation. An infant can-

not repent, he cannot believe; he is as yet only a vocal hunger.

The great danger in the Christian life is that we shall come to think of ourselves as having earned the blessings of Jesus Christ. Even those who go through a great religious experience sometimes talk so much of the new life they have adopted, of their new heart and purified emotions, that they suggest to others, and (it is to be feared) feel within themselves, that they deserve this salvation. Even a man who understands that our good works can never merit salvation, and who knows that only faith can justify us, may be seduced into thinking that his faith is what has won for him eternal life.

One who has been baptized in infancy can never make this mistake. When he was not yet aware, while he was still incapable of doing *anything* that could merit God's praise, Christ took him into his arms and blessed him. That, I am sure, is one incidental advantage of infant baptism. We can never imagine that such a baptism is anything but the free and gracious work of God.

III

I have noted in passing that in the New Testament the requirements for becoming a Christian

are repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and baptism. We must now ask where the repentance and faith is to be found when a baby is baptized. And the only answer is that it is found in the godparents and in the parents, and only potentially in the child.

The mystery of free-will will tax the philosophers until the end of time. We assume that we are responsible free agents, choosing our own destiny and presiding over our fate; yet only a little reflection will show how hard it is to prove. There is a story that John Bradford, on seeing evil-doers being taken to the place of execution, was wont to exclaim: "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford." Yes, but why was the grace of God effective in him and not in the evil-doer? Why is this man good and that man bad? What made William Ewart Gladstone a Christian and John Morley, his biographer (in character perhaps more attractive than Gladstone) one who rejected the Christian Gospel?

Yes, there is mystery in our lives, but the Bible proclaims man's freedom through all his limitations and the circumstances which condition his life. No unhappy destiny can shut you off from the love of God, if you desire that love. Conversely, no favourable circumstances can guarantee

your salvation. No man goes to hell unless he chooses hell, and no man enters into heaven unless his soul freely responds to the love of God.

Life, then, is a choosing. In every one of our acts which have moral significance, we are turning to life and the love of God or we are turning from life and denying God. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed shall live" (Deut. 30:19).

But when do we begin choosing? When we reach the fulness of maturity? at adolescence? at ten years of age, or five or two? The psychologist today informs us of the importance of our early years, and tells us that what happened to us when we were very young may have effects which persist through life as a blessing or a curse. Were we choosing in those early experiences or not?

With such a human nature, the instinct of the Church from the earliest days was to claim each child for Christ as soon as it could, to surround him with heavenly influences, to make him aware as soon as possible of God's love for him and Christ's acceptance of him. Thus even as he becomes aware of the world around him he will become aware also of heaven, and it will be as

reasonable for him to love his God as to love his mother.

There will be those who will question whether parents and godparents have the right to decide that a child shall grow up into the Christian faith. I once heard a distinguished psychiatrist urging parents to avoid telling their children lies or fairy tales. Then he said, "Teach them the truth about religion, that there are many religions in the world." I do not think that this particular psychiatrist would have been dismayed if someone had pointed out to him that behind his remark was the assumption that no religion has the final truth, and that it does not really make much difference what religion we believe in as long as we don't believe in it too seriously. But it is wise for us to realize that these assumptions are there. And the point is that such outlooks are venturing to decide a child's future as much as a Christian does when he brings his child to baptism and continues to train him in the Christian way. We cannot escape our social natures, nor our influence on other people. Parents inevitably train their children. They may train them according to a plan or without any plan, but they will train them. They will impart to them their ideas of religion whether they realize it or not. The father who

refuses to teach his child the Christian Gospel is tacitly teaching him that it is not true or at least that it is an optional extra in life. The mother whose chief teaching about religion is that there are many religions is really teaching that none of these religions is important.

Nor can the community escape its responsibility for the development of the child. As he begins to move out of his home into the world, to go to school and the movies, and as the world comes into his home through his friends, the radio, the newspaper, the comics and the television set, the child soaks in the community's real beliefs about life and religion. Often they are at variance with his parents' beliefs, and when that happens it is amazing how often the community's opinions win over the parents' faith. Recently on a railway station platform an old Hutterite was talking to me of the difficulties his sect meets in keeping their children to Hutterite ways. The world, its pleasures and comforts, are too much for some of them.

Knowing all this, the Christian parents and the Christian Church accept their responsibility — they could not avoid it even if they would. They believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life. So they place the child in the way of

life. Many influences will call him to the way of death, but at least he will grow up aware of his better destiny, to be God's son.

IV

Admittedly baptism can mean less than this to parents. They may be merely wanting to get the child "done," assuring for him the vague magic that they find in baptism. They may be merely taking part in a social custom, and choose for godparents those most likely to shower gifts on the child.

There is need for a reform in our manner of carrying out the Sacrament of Baptism. One great need is that godparents should be, wherever possible, practising church members, communicants and enthusiastic believers. The old rule was that parents could not be godparents; for the responsibility of parent and godparent is different, though directed towards the same goal. The parents have their duty in the home, to make it a Church-home. The Church at large has its duty also towards the child. The parish in which he grows up will inevitably influence him. If its life is weak, conventional or narrow, he will suffer. If it is strong in faith, missionary in spirit and truly

a fellowship of the Holy Spirit, as he develops he will breathe the atmosphere of heaven. In the person of the godparent, the Church accepts its responsibility.

Yes, there is need for reform in the way in which we carry out baptism. But even without that reform, the Church continues to baptize infants. Though their parents may not realize it, though the community around them ignores it, these children were born to know God's love. It is right that at the beginning their share in all that Christ has done for us should be claimed.

But it is only the beginning. In our new Draft Prayer Book, we pray that "whosoever shall begin to be of thy flock may evermore continue in the same." We shall have to see how the Prayer Book provides for that to come about.

Ye must remember that it is your parts and duties to see that this Infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession he hath here made by you. And that he may know these things the better, ye shall call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.

Charge to the Godparents: Public Baptism of Infants.

It follows from that doctrine of baptism, which lies at the threshold of our Churchmanship, that we suppose every Christian infant to be taken under the guardianship and education of God's Holy Spirit. In the faith of this truth, the well-instructed parent brings up his child. Whatever of stern discipline he uses to curb its self-will, whatever of tender affections he manifests to call forth in it corresponding affections, hath this end, that the subject of his visible and temporary government may be brought to feel that it is under the government of an unseen Teacher; that the object of his imperfect and wavering love may perceive that it is unceasingly tended and brooded over by a love which is unchangeable and imperishable. Which life-giving truth, when it has dawned upon the mind of the child, will create some blossoms and buds there, upon which the parent will gaze with an anxious but confiding eye. Strange thoughts and impulses before unknown; wonder respecting his own condition, hopes stretching into infinity; a deepening sense of ever-present evil; a brightening view of an ever-present Deliverer; such mingled emotions, as he watches them arising, the foster-father knows assuredly to be indications that his care has not been in vain, and that the boy is learning the secret of his other — his royal parentage.

The Kingdom of Christ II p. 93.

4

FIRST STEPS ON THE WAY

THERE is an old-fashioned ring to the passage from Maurice that stands on the opposite page, and one may wonder how many families today could claim it to be a true description of the development of their children. Yet if it be old-fashioned to care about a child's spiritual growth and to speak spontaneously about God's love and about prayer, goodness, temptation, and evil, there are still old-fashioned parents to be found.

One son at least cannot forget the stories his mother used to tell him. There was a story called "Follow the Gleam", about a boy whose princely father sent him to journey home by himself. The father gave him, however, a guide for his lonely journey; if he kept his eyes constantly on a light that shone in the distance, he would find himself safe home at last. The story of the boy's progress,

of the times when he strayed from the Gleam and was lost, because he had been attracted by flowers or a butterfly or an easier-looking path, of the folk he met who set him once more in the path of the Gleam, until at last he was in his father's home — this story has lingered in memory. Many times when (too easily) he has been tempted to settle for less than the highest, the son has heard his mother's voice, "Follow the Gleam".

But what if a child's parents, through ignorance or too much cleverness, through carelessness or lack of faith, fail to open the child's mind and heart to his heavenly calling? I once had a request that I call on a young mother. She was not a practising member of a church; indeed she told me frankly, she felt no need for religion in her life. Yet she asked me if I would baptise her child. "It doesn't mean anything to me," she said, "yet still I want it for my child — I don't know why. I promise to send her to Sunday School and to Church if you require that. The one thing I cannot promise is to pretend to her that I believe what I don't believe." It was not a very hopeful basis for baptism, but there was one favourable circumstance. Her best friend was a convinced and earnest member of the Church, and she was willing to be a godmother. I knew that she, at

least, would keep the child ever in mind of the "solemn vow, promise and profession that would be made in her name".

When the home fails, there is still the Church, which means for the child the company of Christians in his community. And many a child has come to know the love of God through a friend of the family, a godparent, a devoted Sunday School teacher or a wise and godly rector.

The Catechism is our Prayer Book's formal provision for the Christian training of the children of the Church. It is provided that "the Curate of every Parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and Holy Days, or at such other times as he may think convenient, instruct and examine the children of his parish in this Catechism; and it is expedient that this should be done openly in the Church, from time to time, either after the second Lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer, or at some other time." And the Prayer Book adds, "all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, Mistresses, and Guardians, shall cause their children, servants, apprentices, and wards to come to such instruction at the time appointed."

Unfortunately, the programme has seldom been effectively followed. We read in Liturgy and Worship, — "Documentary evidence in abun-

dance from the visitation articles, charges and other writings of bishops and divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries make it clear beyond a doubt that, whilst they were anxious that the catechising of children in preparation for Confirmation should be faithfully performed, it was, in fact very generally neglected . . . In the eighteenth century . . . Confirmation was increasingly rare and casual in its administration. It seems indubitable that the instruction of the young in the Catechism was similarly slack and irregular.”

In the nineteenth century there was a revival of religious instruction for the young. The Catechism was not forgotten in this revival. It was the basis of much of the teaching in the Church Day Schools and in the Sunday Schools. As a result, one can still meet Canadians, born in England, who went to Sunday School twice every Sunday, and who still remember the Catechism and Sunday Collects they once learned.

To-day many are doubtful about the value of the Catechism because it does not fit easily into modern methods of education. We hear a great deal about the folly of forcing children to learn by rote words that can have no meaning for them. But “there is much to be said for learning by heart

great statements of religious truth, which will be a permanent possession, gradually interpreted more fully by the experience of life, provided that they already enshrine for the hearer part, at any rate, of their meaning" (Liturgy and Worship, p. 433).

There can be no question that the Catechism as a statement of truth is a noble document. Some think it is too short, and in the proposed new Canadian Prayer Book a Supplementary Instruction is added, which deals with the Church and the ministry, and gives a Rule of Life for us to follow. But in the old Catechism we were given the essential diet of a Christian, the "things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." Here is the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer; in these we have the faith by which we live, the Divine laws according to which we must walk, and the model prayer, our Lord's own gift, to keep us close to God.

First, in the section entitled "The Covenant" the child learns the meaning of his baptism and understands what he is in this world for. Oliver Cromwell is said to have remarked that no man will go so far as the man who does not know where he is going. By this he meant that the really successful man is the one who obeys a Divine imperative within him, regardless of the

consequences; this is indeed better than the man who acts only according to some prudent, earthly plan which has as its objective a realizable (and paltry) goal. Abraham, we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in obedience to God, "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). But he had a goal, if a goal only dimly seen, and this is the truth that Cromwell's remark omits. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

Men need direction in life; too often their lives are aimless, each action undertaken in obedience to the impulse, good or bad, of the moment. The Catechism at its beginning gives the child his direction; he is to live as "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven".

The second section of the Catechism is "The Faith". In this we learn the Creed which proclaims the great saving truths of the Gospel, and declare our faith in God the Father who made us, God the Son who hath redeemed us, and God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us.

The third section is "The Commandments." Strength and integrity enter into a man, when through the Ten Commandments he learns that there *are* laws of God that he must obey. The

use of the Ten Commandments in the Catechism and in the Service of the Holy Communion imparted something strong and righteous to the English character. Our modern morality suffers in comparison. It is the product of an age in which the Ten Commandments are out of fashion, and all moral laws are treated as if they were somewhat questionable social conventions.

The Catechism summarizes the teaching of the Ten Commandments in two answers: my duty towards God and my duty towards my neighbour. The word "duty" is harsh to our ears, but we can never avoid our duty if we would know the good life. This word stands for what is due — what we owe to God and to man. Our Lord has shown us that this duty is fundamentally love; to love God and to love our Neighbour is the sum of all the Commandments. This love is their due. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Romans 13:8).

There is another word in this section of the Catechism which will help us to keep our loves from sentimentality. That word is *honour*. Indeed, it is possible to express all Christian morality in terms of honour — honour to God, honour to others, and honour to self. If we truly honour God, we are saved from the temptation to worship

things like money, fame, and power. If a man really honours a woman, he cannot enter into an illicit sexual relationship with her. If he truly honours other men, he cannot tell them lies. And if he honours himself he will keep his body in "temperance, soberness, and chastity". Words like honour and duty may be old-fashioned, but, when they disappear from our thoughts, we become weak and flabby in character.

The Catechism ended, in its earlier editions, with the section on "Prayer". Thus its last answer was that expansion of the Lord's Prayer which is known as the "Desire". It would be well if sometimes in our private prayers we opened our Prayer Book and tried to make the Desire the honest prayer of our hearts.

The Section on the Sacraments was added in 1604. It is more theological in tone and does not give itself so easily to the liturgical use for which the older part is so eminently fitted. In the original Catechism you can almost see the children in Church in the midst of the congregation, answering the rector as he questions them. In the added part, the answers do not seem so natural. Yet this section on the Sacraments is valuable. From the Catechism, thus expanded, the child learns his great inheritance, the faith and the laws

by which he must live, and the means of grace — the Divine assistance in Prayer and Sacraments — that will enable him to walk in the way to which he is called.

This then, is an outline of the Church's formal provision for the education of its children. Yet we must again ask ourselves: will it work?

In one sense, it is doomed from the start. The revisions the Prayer Book has undergone since 1549 have not wholly taken from it an assumption that was never justified in experience. Cranmer and his associates hoped and prayed that the Church of England would be the Church of the Nation. Richard Hooker said, "There is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any man a member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England." If this had ever become true, the Prayer Book Way would have been more effective. The Catechism presupposes these conditions: that the child shall go to church in company with his parents and the rest of his family, and that the social environment in which he lives will be "permeated with the spirit and meaning of the Church's liturgy".

These conditions were never fully met. From the first there were Englishmen who dissented

from the Prayer Book Way. In Canada we are a minority Church. Only a few of the children who meet our children in Public and High School know anything about the Catechism or the Prayer Book; moreover as they progress through High School to University, the atmosphere is increasingly secular and even unfriendly to Christianity.

Yet the undoubted fact is that some of our children do learn to walk in that way of life which is implied in the Prayer Book. This seems to happen most often in the country, where the home and the parish church and the community still have much in common, in activity and in spirit.

During my years in Ottawa, I came to know a number of people whom I began to group in my mind as "Ottawa Valley Christians". Among the settlers in the Ottawa Valley a great number came from the north of Ireland, and they brought with them a strong loyalty to the Church. From such families come the Ottawa Valley Christians. They show forth a natural goodness, a wholesomeness which is the fruit of a life lived from the first in the sunshine of Christian faith. They work for their Church; some indeed have entered the ministry and have given distinguished service. Their goodness has a flavour noticeably

different from that intense morality and almost hysterical happiness shown forth by those who have had an adult experience of conversion. William James would call them the "once-born". They have an open-faced honesty, and a sincerity that extends to the deepest levels of personality. They are kindly, helpful, and their Church is clearly the main-spring of their existence.

I have visited the small parish churches in which they grew up. Before the Service you will find one or two classes of Sunday School pupils sitting somewhat uncomfortably in the pews, while a teacher, probably a young girl and perhaps herself one of my "Ottawa Valley Christians", goes through the lesson. The method of teaching is probably all wrong. There is none of the teaching equipment you would find in a large Sunday School. Yet the children are learning the Catechism in the Church; they will stay on for the Service that follows; they will sit with their parents, and see their relatives and neighbours around them. Their Church reaches into their town-life and their farm-life. It is all as near to the conditions presupposed by our Catechism as you could find in the twentieth century.

The General Board of Religious Education of our Canadian Church is advocating a new ap-

proach to the religious education of children. This programme involves the whole parish, so that the education of the children grows into the religious education of the parish. Churchwardens, vestrymen, officers of societies, Sunday School teachers, parents, godparents — all share in the programme. When this programme has been fully worked out by our Church, what happens in country parishes will be possible in every parish. The worshipping Church and the working community will be one; and the children, as they learn all the things that they need to believe and know to their soul's health, will also be living these things because they see and feel them happening all around them.

BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP

Ye are to take care that this Child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

The Public Baptism of Infants.

This institution, not displacing or superseding Baptism, but confirming, as its name denotes, the authority and pledges of that sacrament, declares to the child that He who has guided it through infancy will be with it in the conscious struggles of manhood, and that it has been made free, not only of a particular congregation, but of the Universal Church.

The Kingdom of Christ I, 271

5

BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP

THERE is a continuing discussion in our Church about the best age for Confirmation. Dr. Pusey is said to have remarked that we should be confirmed "either in the innocence of ten or the penitence of twenty". There is a growing feeling that adolescence is an unsuitable time. In "Liturgy and Worship" a distinguished psychologist is quoted: "Confirmation at this age of rapid growth and emotional instability will too often lead to undesirable repressions, or to a later regret and refusal of religious experience."

(Liturgy and Worship, pp. 456-7.)

It is the experience of most of the clergy that in an alarming number of cases Confirmation becomes practically a graduation from Church. A boy or girl gets confirmed, appears once or twice at the Holy Communion, and then disappears.

Thus we must recognize that if the Prayer Book's plan for the Christian life breaks down, it is most likely to happen soon after Confirmation. We must enquire into the reason for this.

Confirmation is essentially the completion of Baptism. In the early Church the two rites were performed together. In the Orthodox Church of the East this is still the custom, and infants are confirmed by unction, the oil having been blessed by the bishop. In the West there was a different development. After it was no longer possible for the bishop to officiate at all baptisms, he reserved to himself the Confirmation (as it was reserved for the Apostles in the New Testament). Inevitably children had to wait for their Confirmation.

In time a value was found in this delay. It meant that the completion of Baptism came at a time when the child could understand, and offer at least the beginnings of repentance and faith, as his small response to the gracious blessing of God. So the Lateran Council in 1215 defined the duty of Communion as beginning with "years of discretion". In the Roman Catholic Church today a child is confirmed when around seven, when he is presumably capable of reason.

Our Church has never legislated on the exact age for Confirmation. Children are to be "brought

to the bishop to be confirmed by him", as soon as they can "say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism". In the Rubrics after the Catechism the further suggestion is made that the "children be come to a competent age", and in the Order of Confirmation itself this is called "the years of discretion".

Few of us are likely to feel that seven is the right age for Confirmation, especially in view of the fact that at the Reformation the solemn renewal of the baptismal vows was added to the Service. Many people make the mistake of thinking that this, the subjective side of our Service, is what makes it a Confirmation. They think that the person confirmed really does the confirming, in that he "ratifies and confirms" his baptismal vows.

But the vital part of Confirmation is not what we do, but what God does. The laying on of hands is the essential act, with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will come with his blessings. Of course, he has been working in our lives since we were baptized, as the Service of Baptism makes abundantly clear. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is always coming upon us but in Confirmation he comes to endow us with the fulness of grace. His sevenfold gifts are needed when we begin to accept the full responsibilities of the Christian Life.

Confirmation is thus a sacramental rite. It is not dignified by the name of Sacrament in our Prayer Book, because only those rites which in the New Testament record were instituted by Christ himself are so named. But it has an "outward and visible sign", the laying on of hands. There is an "inward and spiritual grace", the gift of the Holy Spirit. "The rite partakes of the nature of the sacramental," says Massey Shepherd, "that is, it is not simply a badge and token of Christian men's profession, but rather a certain sure witness and effectual sign of grace, 'and God's will towards us by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in Him.'"

Thus our opinion about the best age for Confirmation will depend upon which side of Confirmation is uppermost in our thoughts. If we emphasize the intelligent and convinced renewal of our Baptismal vows, we shall be inclined to favour a late date. Many parents and even some children wish to postpone the Confirmation until these vows

can unmistakably have meaning. The logical time for this would surely be from eighteen to twenty-one.

But if the sacramental meaning of Confirmation is realized, an earlier age will be preferred. Until we are confirmed, we lack the full equipment of a Christian. If our Confirmation is late, we have to meet our first fully-realized encounters with evil and temptation before we have entered into the full sacramental life of the Church. One of the rubrics of the Prayer Book of 1549 stated that Confirmation "is most meet to be ministered when children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the devil, they begin to be in danger to fall into sin."

These are the considerations that lead me to feel that from ten to twelve is the best age for Confirmation. At this age, the child can "say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments", and also give the beginnings, at least, of intelligent answers to "such other questions as in the Catechism are contained". If the significance of his baptism has been brought home to him, by the teaching of parents and the Church, he is ready to affirm with real purpose his baptismal vows. Thus there may be fixed in his life those

practices — daily prayer, weekly public worship, regular Communion, — which will keep his soul fresh through the turmoils of adolescence. He may have his doubts and his failures later — when in this life do they cease? But, if he is learning the Prayer Book Way by walking in it, he knows that he is fully equipped. The Holy Spirit is his Guide, the Holy Communion his refreshment, as he walks day by day with the “blessed company of all faithful people”. If he sins, he knows how to confess his sins and once more be at home with God. He grows into manhood with a workable plan for the Christian life.

It does not always happen thus; indeed, we began this chapter by noticing how often young people fall away from the Church after Confirmation. But I am convinced that the reason for this failure is not Confirmation itself. If age is a factor, it is due to our long-established custom of choosing the adolescent period. Here my personal experience fits in with what the psychologists say about adolescence. On the whole I find a more frequent falling away on the part of those who are confirmed at the ages of fourteen to sixteen. But even at that age adolescents appear before me for the laying on of hands with an earnestness that shines in their faces. The trouble is that they

do not have either the subsequent instruction or the daily companionship on the way, that the Prayer Book really requires. Confirmation as an isolated act has never been very effective. Confirmation, as one step forward in the life of following Christ, as one further blessing from God, may be and is a precious memory and a continuing benediction.

The Christian life does not end with its beginning. When St. Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, he called the Christians there "saints". He knew that they were born again. Yet he also knew how far their life was from the fullness of Christ. So he rebuked them, he counselled them, he instructed them. In St. Augustine's phrase, he was saying to them, "Become what you are."

The newly-confirmed Churchman is in a similar state. Is he saved? Yes. Christ died for him and he has been baptized. Will he be saved? It all depends on whether he leads the rest of his life according to its beginning in Baptism. He may have been confirmed not really meaning it, not accepting in his soul the vows made at his Baptism. If so, poor lad, he has done a dreadful thing, and he will need conversion. But if he was confirmed believing, with all the reality that his

youthful soul was capable of, that he is God's child and that he must follow his Saviour Jesus Christ, then he is in the way of salvation. He will not need conversion; he is even now inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit is guiding him day by day.

There are yet many stern tests for his faith. The world will woo him, his flesh will weaken him, and always there will be the temptation to "go it alone" to try to be the master of his fate.

One of the first of these tests may have been upon him even while he was being confirmed. In pre-adolescent and adolescent years there is often a reaction against the opinions of one's parents. Monsignor Ronald Knox is said to have remarked, "I must have a religion, and it must be different from my father's." That attitude, almost unrealized, may be in the heart of the Confirmation candidate. He is "brought" to the bishop; his parents, and sometimes his godparents, are still guiding him. He may accept Confirmation outwardly at the very period when his inmost soul is beginning to turn from the Church just because his parents accept it.

Here is a fact that puts the Christian Church and the Christian parents on their mettle. There is a reason for this youthful protest and for the

rejection by each generation of the fashions of the generation before. Even in the Church the world and its vanities creep in, and this protest may be God's way of keeping us on our toes.

But if parents, godparents, and the Church have done their work well, the adolescent's reaction will not drive him from Christ. He may be critical, even unjustly critical, of his parents and of the Church. But he cannot forget his Lord.

... That the people ... might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion.

Book of Common Prayer. Introduction.

The worshipper has found that object to which the eyes of himself and of all creatures were meant to be directed, in beholding which they attain the perfection of their being, while they lose all the feeling of selfish appropriation which is incompatible with perfection. They gaze upon Him who is the all-embracing Love, with whom no selfishness can dwell, the all-clear and distinguishing Truth, from which darkness and falsehood flee away; and they are changed into the same image, and their praises are only the responses to the joy with which He looks upon His redeemed creation and declares it very good.

The Kingdom of Christ II, 25.

6

THE LIFE OF WORSHIP

WHEN we have been baptized and confirmed, the Church sends us out into the world equipped for the journey through life. It may be that our faith in Christ and our obedience to God are not yet complete; but then, who except our Lord himself, has in this world shown perfect faith or complete obedience? A member of the Oxford Group once described his conversion wisely and honestly. He said "I surrendered as much of myself as I knew to as much of Christ as I knew." There is for every Christian the process of sanctification.

Therefore the Church calls upon its members, in Christ's name, to live a life of public worship, prayer, Bible-reading, Holy Communion and Christian service. These are our activities on the way; these are our steps to heaven. We must now consider them one by one, and we begin with public worship. Our Christian life is incomplete

unless, every Sunday that we can possibly manage it, we assemble with God's people for the worship of God.

All life, properly understood, is worship. "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." Therefore it is eminently fitting that we should learn the Christian life from the book which directs our worship. Of course, we must always understand that the chief aim of worship is not to help the worshipper, not even to help him be a Christian, but to adore the living God. "Not man's needs and wishes" said Evelyn Underhill, "but God's presence and incitement, first evoke it (i.e. worship). As it rises towards purity, and leaves egoistic piety behind, He becomes more and more the only Fact of existence, the one Reality; and the very meaning of Creation is seen to be an act of worship, a devoted proclamation of the splendour, the wonder, and the beauty of God." ("Worship" p. 5. Harper and Brothers 1937.)

This is a truth that we do not accept easily. People go to church hoping to "get something out of" the Service, and if they do not they are disposed to stay away. Man's greatest temptation is to think of himself as the centre of the universe, and to estimate the value of all things in terms of

their usefulness to him. Even his love becomes selfish and self-seeking. In that spirit men make worship serve them and their needs and they draw near to God for the sake of what he can do for them.

How fatal this is to the true spirit of worship may be realized when we know that our relationship with God must ultimately become one of love. "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). It is our privilege, our great destiny, that we may respond to this Infinite Charity with the free yet humble response of our answering love. And when we seek to tell God of our love, we worship.

We see what happens in our human loves when men and women make love utilitarian, using their affection for someone else to minister to their own egos. A mother clinging to her daughter for security, a father moulding his son into the image suggested by his thwarted ambitions, a husband using his wife as a beautiful toy — all these are distortions of love because they are selfish. Love begins to be love indeed when it becomes self-forgetful. Its true expression is self-giving and its joy is the good of the loved one.

If then our destiny is to love God and if in

worship we begin to enter into this inheritance of love, we can never measure worship in terms of its effect upon us. The question must always be: is this a worthy offering for him who is the Holy One and the Beloved?

“What can I give him,
Poor as I am?”

It is only our growing awareness of the poverty of our response to the love of God that drives us back to a consideration of the effect of our worship on our own souls. We would worship in spirit and in truth, but how can we unless someone lifts us up to the realms of truth? Therefore worship always has its element of instruction, the reading of Scripture and the sermon. Moreover, how can we learn to make our worship that complete self-giving in adoration and wonder which it should be, except by worshipping as far as we may at present? We need to turn from our worship humbled and yet ennobled, lifted up yet contrite, to live a better life because we have been in the courts of the temple. We bring that better life back again to our worship, and because it is the offering of a better life, it is now more truly and completely the lifting up of our hearts to the infinite beauty of God.

Archbishop Cranmer and his associates knew

this. They wanted the Church of England to offer to God a pure and holy worship and that meant that the people of the Church must pray with understanding. They sprinkled the Prayer Book with exhortations, indeed they overdid it. They permitted few Services to begin without first an explanation to the congregation of its meaning and purpose. The Exhortation to repentance before the General Confession at Morning and Evening Prayer and in the Holy Communion, the Exhortations at Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, the Visitation of the Sick, and the Communion Office, all are designed to help the worshipper to offer to God intelligent, meaningful worship.

In all this, of course, our Reformers were showing themselves true Englishmen. Numerous writers have pointed out that the Englishman tends to be practical and moralistic in his religion. He measures its effect in terms of daily conduct and can see little value in an ecstasy of adoration which does not result in good works. Evelyn Underhill goes to the Middle Ages to illustrate this characteristic. She remarks, "The celebrated passage in which Walter Hinton condemns the Christianity 'which is content to adorn Christ's Head, but neglect His Feet' is thoroughly English

in teaching and tone;" and she continues — "The messengers of God who visit Piers Plowman are Do Well, Do Bet, Do Best. It is Good Deeds who saves the Soul of Everyman." (Worship" p. 320. Harpers.)

Thus Cranmer was exhibiting the national spirit when, in one of the Prefaces to the First Prayer Book of 1549, he commended the ceremonies retained from the old order as those "which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified."

Cranmer, however, never forgot the real meaning of worship. When in another Preface he said that the purpose of the Divine Service (Morning and Evening Prayer) is "the advancement of godliness" he spoke the pure language of worship. He did not mean by "godliness" that we should become good, but that we should become God-conscious in all our doings.¹ That we should awake to the living God and draw near to him with the sacrifice of a Christ-filled life, is what our Prayer Book aims at. Yet — "what doth the

¹I owe this point to J. P. Hodges. "The Riches of our Prayer Book" p. 15 (SPCK 1941).

Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8.) We cannot walk with God unless we do justly. We can never enter the Courts of Heaven through worship unless that worship is offered in righteousness, for in Heaven "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Revelation 21:27).

That is the English spirit and through our Prayer Book we enter into that spirit. The Anglican Communion is now a great fellowship of many races and tongues. In Canada the day is ending when our Church will be spoken of as the "English Church". More and more our membership will be drawn from those whose race is other than Anglo-Saxon. This is a development which it is foolish to deplore; it is both inevitable and glorious. It has happened in the United States and it will happen to us, as we gladly welcome into our Church life Canadians of many backgrounds.

In time we shall doubtless develop a distinctively Canadian spirit in religion and offer it as our contribution to the rich variety of the Universal Church. But even then we shall be Anglicans,

heirs through the Prayer Book of all that is good in the English temper.

From that English temper comes the unique character of the Prayer Book. It is at once a handbook for worship, a rule of faith, and a guide for daily life. It is the laymen's possession as much as the priest's and he knows that in the Prayer Book he has the only Anglican standard for worship, faith and life.

Other communions have their official confessions, their clear statements of what they believe. In the Thirty-nine Articles we have the beginnings of such an official confession but our Church never completed the job. If you would learn the faith of the Anglican Church you must study the whole Prayer Book. It is in our worship that our faith is revealed. This may exasperate others who would like to see our beliefs more precisely defined, but we find it eminently fitting. We see something significant in this statement from the Athanasian Creed: "Now the Catholic Faith is this: that we *worship* one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity."

So our worship instructs us in the Christian life. Our life, our faith, and our worship interact until they become one offering of love to God in Jesus Christ. And, because we learn the Christian

life from the book that guides our public worship, there follows one great blessing. We learn that the purpose of life is not our moral improvement important as that is. We work, we struggle, we grow, that the King of Kings may be seen in his Beauty, and that God may be all in all.

My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer.

The Catechism.

“When thou enterest into thy closet,” these are the words of our Lord—say “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.” O wonderful teaching! not how the selfishness of the closet may be carried into the temple, but how the breadth and universality of spirit which belong to the temple may be attained in the closet.

When thou art most alone thou must still, if thou wouldest pray, be in the midst of a family; thou must call upon a Father; thou must not dare to say my, but our . . . The evil from which you must pray to be forgiven is a common evil, and evil is the same in root and principle, though it may take innumerable forms; that very evil of selfishness, of individuality, which we are disposed to make our very prayers a means of seeking, and which will encompass us and possess us, if we do not learn to join in the ascription: “Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory.”

The Kingdom of Christ II, 27.

7

BY DILIGENT PRAYER

THE public worship of the Church is a corporate activity; our own life of prayer seems by contrast to be intensely personal, even private. In Church we find ourselves surrounded by a worshipping congregation, but when we say our personal prayers we are quiet and alone. Yet the Prayer Book does not encourage us to press this contrast too far. Even when we are by ourselves, reading our Bible or kneeling before our God, we are called upon to remember that we belong to a great praying, worshipping and Bible-reading fellowship.

It is all too easy to be individualistic even in the things that we do with others. A man may come to church seeking a private blessing for himself, and there are those who come to the "early" Service of the Holy Communion because

they want to avoid the crowds that come to the chief Sunday Service. Alfred Whitehead has said, "Religion is what a man does with his solitariness." If this means that we could only test the reality of a man's religion by watching him when he is alone or by peering into the secret places of his heart, it may be true. But if it means that in solitude we get to the heart of religion it is a disastrous mistake. For it means introducing into our religion the very sin from which our religion is meant to free us — the sin, in Maurice's words, "of having chosen to be divided when we were meant to be one."

That is the reason for the passage from Maurice that stands at the head of this chapter. It shows us that in prayer, that most personal, intimate and secret activity, we can never forget our brethren if we pray in the way that Christ taught us. And here the Prayer Book has entered into the mind of Christ. Its provision for Prayer and Bible-reading, like its provision for worship and the Eucharist, is always that of a brotherhood, a fellowship. It never forgets that we have companions on the way.

The Prayer Book's teaching about prayer is incidental. Because its primary purpose is the public worship of the Church, it does not lay down a programme of teaching about prayer. In the

Catechism, of course, this teaching is provided. The Catechism says "My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him without his special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." And all through the Prayer Book it is evident that this diligent personal prayer is expected of the Christian. Special times of intercession for special needs are provided, such as the Rogation Days for prayers for the harvest of land and sea, and the Ember Days for those who are to be ordained. In the Ordinal, the Bishop calls for the prayers of the people before he ordains Deacons. In the Consecration of Bishops we are reminded that such a consecration should come only after prayer, and we are given the example of our Lord who prayed all night before he chose the Twelve, and the example of the Church in Antioch where they fasted and prayed before they commissioned Paul and Barnabas. In the Service of Institution and Induction the Bishop speaks to the congregation thus: "Therefore I charge and exhort you, Brethren and Churchwardens of this Parish, to pray continually for this your Minister who is set over you in the

Lord, and to help him forward in all the duties of his holy calling.”

But more important than all this counsel is the fact of the Prayer Book itself as it is found in the hands and in the homes of the people. It is noteworthy that often, in a visit to a patient in a hospital, you will see the Prayer Book on the table beside the bed. Such people are finding in the Prayer Book the words that they may use in their prayers. Would you find words with which to begin your prayers? There is the Collect for Purity:

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord.”

Is your time for prayer short, so that you want a prayer that sums it all up, says *everything* to God that you could want to say? There are such collects as that for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity:

“Lord of all power and might, who are the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and

of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Certainly we would benefit by more instruction in this way of using the Prayer Book, especially as so few of us today learn the Sunday Collects by heart as our parents used to do. There are helps available like these:

The Collects in Our Prayers

J. Northbridge

Let Us Pray. Praying with the Church

Roland F. Palmer,
(S.P.C.K. 1950)

Prayers and Their Answers as Found in the Psalms of David

Frank Wise (G.B.R.E. 1949.)

But even without these, men and women, by *using* their Prayer Book, have found the words that express the thoughts rising up in their souls towards God.

When we use the Prayer Book in our personal prayer, there is a consequence which may seem surprising. The sincerity of our prayer deepens as we learn to know this great treasury of devotion. I call this a surprising consequence because it is not what people normally expect. They think that the really sincere prayer will come, not from

a book, but from the heart. This was one of the reasons why so many Churches of the Reformation abolished set prayers and rejoiced in "extempore prayer". "A set form of words drawn up by others, long ago it might be, was no vehicle for expressing the wants of a congregation of believers met in the Spirit. Under divine quickening they knew their own wants, and their only need was for the appointed minister to give utterance to what was in all their hearts, to be, in Puritan phraseology, their mouth to God." (A. G. Matthews in "Christian Worship," edited by N. Micklem. Oxford 1936. Page 176).

Here we are thinking of our personal prayers rather than of public worship, so we shall not pause to examine this argument. No doubt, a prayer written by someone else can become a mere formality, a "vain repetition". If we kneel down to pray without faith or any honest hope that our prayer can have meaning, and if we open the Prayer Book only because our souls are empty, the result will certainly be:

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

This, however, is not the use but the abuse of the Prayer Book. As we enter more truly into the worship of the Church we find its words express-

ing aspirations that our souls as yet are but dimly grasping for. The Church and her saints lead us into a deeper devotion as we use the words that expressed their devotion. These prayers have stood the test of time because there is in them that complete sincerity that is also found in all great poetry and great painting.

A prayer's sincerity is not guaranteed because it is extempore. Whether the words of our prayer are our own or someone else's, we may be praying conventionally or as the hypocrites. But at least if we seek the help of the Prayer Book the words we are using have nothing conventional about them, and their deep sincerity may begin to enter our souls.

I think of a blind woman to whom I used to bring the Holy Communion, and I can hear even now the almost broken penitence with which she uttered the words "The burden of them is intolerable." I do not think that any words of her own could have expressed for her what these words had taught her, the crushing weight of sin.

Only recently a woman spoke to me about her love for the Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Easter:

"O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant

unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord". There is not a word here which is difficult to understand, but it is the prayer of those who have entered into the secret of life. It had taught this woman something about herself which enabled her to pray more truly.

If we read great literature, great thoughts begin to work their way into our minds however closed they may be; but if our reading is confined to comics, we begin to get the comic-book mentality. So with our prayers. If we confine our prayers to the stammering, trite utterances that we can achieve by ourselves, our communion with God may always be fleeting. But if we are content to learn from others, the rich devotion of their prayer will gradually become our own.

There is another principle of true prayer which we fulfil when we use the Prayer Book in our personal prayers. It brings an element of preparation into our prayer. The example of the great men of prayer shows us that if we would lead the life of prayer we must spend even more time

in preparing for prayer than we do in prayer itself.

In our human relationships this need for preparation is not present. The lover may rehearse the speeches he would utter to his "girl-friend", but when he is with her they are forgotten in the spontaneity of communication. In our communion with God, however, there are factors which demand preparation. We never *see* God with our physical eyes; our pride and sin are always calling us away from him; and he is the Infinite while we are lowly creatures of sense.

For this reason, the impulse to be spontaneous and unrehearsed in our prayer is a misleading one. In the "Screwtape Letters" by C. S. Lewis there is a passage in which Screwtape advises Wormwood, his pupil-devil, how to spoil the prayers of the young man who is his special care. "Encourage him to remember, or to think he remembers, the parrot-like nature of his prayers in childhood. In reaction against that, he may be persuaded to aim at something entirely spontaneous, inward, informal and unregularized; and what this will actually mean to a beginner will be an effort to produce in himself a vaguely devotional *mood* in which real concentration of will and intelligence has no part. One of their poets, Coleridge, has recorded that he did not pray 'with moving lips

and bended knees' but merely 'composed his spirit to love' and indulged 'a sense of supplication'. That is exactly the sort of prayer we want; and since it bears a superficial resemblance to the prayer of silence as practised by those who are far advanced in the Enemy's service, clever and lazy patients can be taken in by it for quite a long time." (Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis. The Centenary Press. pp 24-25).

One of the classics of Anglican devotion is the "Preces Privatae" of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, the work of a man who knew that he must prepare for prayer. Of this book Richard Drake said: "Had you seen the original manuscript, happy in the glorious deformity thereof, being slubbered with his pious hands and watered with his penitential tears, you would have been forced to confess that book belonged to no other than pure and primitive devotion."

Dr. Samuel Johnson, another Christian nurtured by the Prayer Book, has left us not only his famous Dictionary, but also the prayers that he carefully wrote, sometimes in Latin. Here, for example, is the prayer that he wrote for New Year's Day, 1757:

"Almighty God, who has brought me to the beginning of another year, and by prolonging

my life invitest to repentance: Forgive me that I have misspent the time past, enable me from this instant to amend my life according to Thy Holy Word, grant me Thy Holy Spirit that I may so pass through things temporal, as not finally to lose the things eternal. O God, hear my prayer; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

You can catch the echoes of the Prayer Book in that prayer. And the point is, that because he knew his Prayer Book and because he prepared for prayer by writing such prayers, he became a man of whom Elton Trueblood could write: “Johnson’s religion was such that prayer came easily and naturally to his lips, almost without effort. It was normal to him.”

We need not feel that such examples are beyond us. We have the same books that Lancelot Andrewes and Samuel Johnson had. The Bible and the Prayer Book, if “scrubbed by our pious hands” will lead us day by day into a closer communion with God. The Psalms will give us words for praise, the General Confessions the framework for our specific confessions, the Collects the words that sum up all that we can ask of God, and the Versicles and Responses the exclamatory prayers that we utter when our need is deep or our time is short. And always, consciously or uncon-

sciously, our prayer is strengthened because we are not alone. We are of the People of God, and our prayers merge with theirs. The worship of God is never a solo. Our most secret prayer is one note blending into the symphony of praise that all Creation, and especially the Redeemed Society, is offering to the living God.

BY DAILY HEARING OF HOLY
SCRIPTURE

And nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Word of God, or that which is agreeable to the same; and that in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers."

Book of Common Prayer, Introduction.

The Scripture is adopted into our worship, the service explains the lessons, the lessons explain the service.—

The Kingdom of Christ II, 286.

The Church exists as a fact, the Bible shows what that fact means. The Bible is a fact, the Church shows what that fact means.

The Kingdom of Christ II, 164.

8

BY DAILY HEARING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

SO far we have not said very much about the place of the Bible in the Christian life. To that we must now turn, and learn that the Bible is the supreme authority for our faith, and the quickening word which comes from him who has willed to make himself known to his children.

The Sixth of our Thirty-nine Articles declares that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." We are all agreed on that. Even the Roman Catholic Church, which gives Tradition, the Voice of the Church, an authority equal to the Bible, contends that none

of its doctrines are contrary to Scripture. Every great communion and every small sect agree in their respect for the Bible; but how different are their interpretations!

As for our Church, it is always appealing to the word of Scripture as its authority for its life and worship. At Morning and Evening Prayer, it calls upon us to Confess because "the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness." It brings infants to Holy Baptism because our Saviour Christ "commanded the children to be brought unto him; he blamed those who would have kept them from him; he exhorted all men to follow their innocency." It commends the Order of Confirmation "because it is evident from sundry places in Holy Scripture that the Apostles prayed for and laid their hands upon those who were baptized."

Matrimony is a somewhat different matter, for it existed before there was a Bible. It is, says our Prayer Book, "an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency." Yet here also the authority of the Bible is appealed to, and we are told that marriage signifies "unto us the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Church," and that Christ "adorned and beautified" this

holy estate “with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee.”

Our Church provides for the ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, because it considers that “it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” And of course in the greatest of Services, the Holy Communion, all that we do follows from the fact that our Saviour Christ took bread and broke it.

Thus the Church continually appeals to Scriptures in her worship. The Reformation, however, was a “back to the Bible” movement throughout, and there was nothing unique in the Church of England’s appeal to Scripture. What was unique was the respect for tradition with which the authority of Scripture was interpreted. Many Protestants attempted to return to First Century Christianity and transplant it into the sixteenth century unchanged. The Church of England did not fall into this mistake. It reasoned that the best interpreters of New Testament Christianity were those who were closest to New Testament times. Therefore the customs and teaching of the primitive Church and of the early Fathers had

great weight in establishing Anglican custom.

Thus Cranmer, in the Preface, "Of Ceremonies Why Some Be Abolished and Some Retained" speaks with sober common sense. He recognizes that usually the Ceremonies used in Church "have had their beginning by the institution of man", not by fiat of Scripture. He says that some of these ceremonies, "at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length turned to vanity and superstition". These must go, along with those that "entered into the Church by undiscreeit devotion, and such a zeal as was without knowledge."

But Cranmer also recognized that there are other ceremonies, "which although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the Church (for the which they were first devised) as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things in the Church (as the Apostle teacheth) ought to be referred."

Again, in 1662, when faced with Puritan demands for many changes, the fathers of our Church recognized that many of these demands, put forth as a return to New Testament ways, were in fact "new-fangled". They pointed out that "common experience sheweth, that where a

change hath been made of things advisedly established (no evident necessity so requiring) sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued; and those many times more and greater than the evils that were intended to be remedied by such change.”

Therefore, our Church kept to the old ways and the old faith, except where the Holy Scripture plainly showed that the old ways were a departure from the first purity of the Christian Way. The Church is a living, growing organism. Its life was not forced into a rigid mold at the end of the Apostles' time, nor are we doomed to attempt the impossible and reproduce in the twentieth century the conditions of the first. Yet our life is continuous with the Church of the Apostles, and so it will continue as long as we continually check our faith and practice by reference to the Bible, not forgetting however the years between then and now.

There is a second feature about our Church's use of the Bible. Much of the Prayer Book is simply “the Bible arranged for public worship”. There are 738 pages in our Canadian Prayer Book. On an actual count about 430 of these pages are taken up with passages from the Bible.

Indeed nearly every page of the Prayer Book has its echoes of Bible language or borrows Biblical

phrases. Consider the familiar Versicles and Responses at Morning Prayer:

“O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon
thee . . .”

All these suffrages are taken from the Psalms. The prayers at Baptism see the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea as a figure of baptism, and, remembering Noah, refer to the Church as an ark. In Matrimony, the prayers are again thoroughly Biblical — God’s blessing to Abraham and Sarah is quoted, and Isaac and Rebecca become examples of faithful living together.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Anglican Church is the most Biblical of Churches, for no other communion uses the Bible as much in its worship. This is no accident; it was a part of Cranmer’s design. In the Original Preface he commended the new book thus: “So here you have an Order for Prayer, and for the reading of the holy Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers, and a great deal more profitable and commodious than that which of late was used . . . Nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Word of God, the holy

Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same; and that in such a language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers.”

Thus it was arranged, and the arrangement still holds good, that at daily Mattins and Evensong the Psalms were read through each month, the greater part of the Old Testament once a year, and the New Testament twice a year.

This programme of daily prayer and Bible-reading is seriously meant. All Priests and Deacons are ordered to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer either publicly or privately. It is further directed that anyone in charge of a Parish Church or Chapel shall say the same in the Church where he ministers, “and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God’s Word, and to pray with him.”

Our practice falls far short of the Prayer Book’s intention. Just as we have failed to make the Holy Communion the chief Sunday Service each week (as the Prayer Book clearly expects) so we have failed in most parish churches to keep to this daily round of prayer and Bible-reading. Yet even with our failures, our people are nourished by the Scriptures. When they come to Morning

or Evening Prayer, they hear the First and Second Lessons. When they come to the Holy Communion they hear the Epistle and the Gospel. Whatever the Service some word of Scripture is heard. Even if the minister reads badly and the people listen apathetically, those Bible words have a way of reaching the heart. "How do you know the Bible is inspired?" Moody once asked one of his pupils. "Because it inspires me," was the answer.

Thus we can put before you the Prayer Book plan for the Christian life because it is a Bible way. The Bible, in the Church's hands, has guided men and women through the ages, bringing some of them at least "unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there is no place left among them, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."

THE PILGRIM'S REFRESHMENT

The most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Exhortation to be read before a Celebration of the Holy Communion.

Could they (the Disciples) doubt that when they ate this bread and drank this wine, He meant that they should have the fullest participation of that sacrifice with which God had declared Himself well pleased, that they should really enter into that Presence, into which the Forerunner had for them entered, that they should really receive in that communion all the spiritual blessings which, through the union of the Godhead with human flesh, the heirs of this flesh might inherit? — Could they doubt that if their spirits were to be raised up to behold the infinite and absolute glory, here they were admitted into that blessedness; that if their hearts and affections desired a manifested and embodied king, here they became united to Him; that if spirit, soul, and body were to be subjected to the government of God's Spirit, that each might be delivered from its own corruption, receive its own quickening, and exert its own living powers, here each received that strength and renewal by which it was enabled to do its appointed work, to overcome its peculiar temptations, to be fitted for its future perfection?

The Kingdom of Christ, Part II Pages 47-8.

9

THE PILGRIM'S REFRESHMENT

THE Holy Communion is the crowning act of worship for most Christians. The Quakers and the Salvation Army, for reasons that seem good to them, have felt that they must not provide this Service for their people. The rest of the Christian world — Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anglican — in different ways and with different emphasis, comes from time to time to that Service which has its origin in what our Saviour did on the night in which he was betrayed.

The provisions in the Prayer Book for the Service of Holy Communion still reflect somewhat the circumstances of the Reformation, although they have been modified in each Revision since that time. In the early days of the Church the Lord's Supper was the chief Service of worship, and on the Lord's Day the faithful regularly were

communicants. As the centuries passed there was a serious decline from this practice. The Mass, as it was now called in Western Europe, was still the chief Sunday Service, but the people attended without communicating. Indeed, by the time of the Lateran Council of 1215 the situation was so bad that the only rule that seemed enforceable was that each person must communicate once a year.

Besides this, there had been a great change in the ideas about the Holy Communion. The official teaching never went as far as the popular belief, which was that each Mass was a separate offering of Christ for the sins of the world, so that two Masses were twice as effective as one. This led to a great increase in the number of private masses, and there were priests whose chief work was to say masses for the souls of the dead.

The aim of Cranmer and his associates as they drew up our first English Prayer Book can be summarized thus:

1. To keep the Holy Communion as the chief Sunday Service.
2. To change the emphasis from attendance at Mass to the receiving of the Holy Communion.
3. To encourage more frequent communions.

- 4 To discourage non-communicating attendance at the Service.
5. To discourage, later to prohibit, the full Service if the priest alone was ready to communicate.

These different aims worked against each other. Our English Reformers found, as the Continental Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church also found, that it was not easy to persuade the people to communicate oftener. There may have been some improvement, but as far as our Church was concerned it was not until the nineteenth century that there was a revival of frequent communions. But the rule prohibiting the full Communion Service unless there were communicants was successfully enforced. As there could not be a Communion Service without communicants, and as communicants did not come forward, Morning Prayer with the Ante-Communion, (that is, the Service of Holy Communion to the end of the Prayer for the Church Militant), became the chief Sunday Service. In time Morning Prayer alone became the chief Sunday Service in many churches. In Canada today, even after the revival of the last century. Morning Prayer and the Holy Communion are regarded by most of our people as Sunday alternatives.

This background will help to explain why the supreme importance of the Holy Communion as the great and normal act of worship for Christ's family, when they come together on his day, may not be immediately apparent to the reader of the Prayer Book. But no one can study that book, or use it honestly in worship, without learning the high value with which the Church regards this Service.

In the first place, it is the Christian's highest privilege, to be granted to him only when he is ready for the full responsibilities of the Christian life. "And there shall be none admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or ready and desirous of being confirmed."

Moreover, if a man is failing to live the Christian life, the one Christian privilege that is denied him is the Holy Communion. "And if any be an open and notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate, having knowledge hereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he have openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life." To be cut off from the Christian Church is to be *excommuni-*

cated. It is at the Lord's Table that we find our true fellowship in Christ's family and our true union with him, so that to be shut off from the Lord's Table is a sign that the Church believes that we have departed from the Christian way.

This highest Christian privilege is also a Christian's simple duty. There is a minimum rule for the members of our Church. "And note, That every Parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one." It must be emphasized that this rule is stricter than the rule which prevailed before the Reformation, and also that it is a *minimum* rule—the Church hopes for a better practice. Indeed, there is an Exhortation which the parish priest is to read "in case he shall see the people negligent to come to the Holy Communion." If you turn to that Exhortation you will realize the solemn earnestness that the Church feels as she calls her members to this "banquet of that most heavenly food". "According to mine Office," the priest is to say, "I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this holy Communion."

As we learn from the Prayer Book what a privilege and duty the Holy Communion is, we also learn the meaning of the Sacrament. This

teaching is given to us in the Catechism, in the three Exhortations that are found after the Prayer for the Church Militant, and in the Service itself. The Catechism declares that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper "was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby". The outward and visible sign of this sacrament, it teaches, is Bread and Wine, and the "inward part or thing signified is the Body and Blood of Christ". Our souls are refreshed and strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ, "as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine".

The three Exhortations in the Communion Service are seldom read now. There are good reasons for this; we have already noticed the tendency of our Reformers to overload our worship with exhortation. Yet it would be wise for all of us from time to time to read them and ponder them. We shall find in them a three fold interpretation of the meaning of the Sacrament.

It is an Act of Remembrance. It is to be received by us in remembrance of our Lord's "meritorious Cross and Passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made par-

takers of the kingdom of heaven". Again, "we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by his precious blood-shedding he hath obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort."

It is an Act of Communion. Our heavenly Father gave us his Son "not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament." As we eat of the Bread and drink of the Cup we "spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

It is an Act of Thanksgiving. It is remarkable that this note of thanksgiving is sounded as clearly as it is in our Prayer Book, for the Reformation came at a time when the Church had lost the sense of Gospel victory and Gospel joy, and there was undue emphasis upon the penitential side of the Christian life. One of the names for the Holy Communion, used from early days, is the Holy Eucharist. "Eucharist" means Thanksgiving; here is a great Thanksgiving Service and our Prayer

Book does not forget it. "It is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God" for all that Christ has done for us. We know our Lord's great love for us; "to him therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give (as we are most bounden) continual thanks."

I am well aware that we of the twentieth century are probably in a better position to understand the full meaning of this great act of worship than were the men who gave us the Prayer Book. They were seeing the Holy Communion in a spirit of reaction against mediaeval errors concerning it, and it was not easy to be balanced and to keep to the truths that these errors had distorted. Moreover, we have access to early service books which were unknown in the sixteenth century, and from them we can learn more of the early Church's thought concerning the Eucharist. For example, the Prayer Book rightly emphasizes the supreme sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, but it concentrates too exclusively on that great event. The Holy Communion is for the re-calling of the whole Christ and his whole life — his Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension as well as his Cross and Passion.

But the marvel is that in a day when individualism was distorting Christian thought, both

Protestant and Roman Catholic, Cranmer with sure Christian instinct provided for a Eucharistic worship that is truly corporate. A member of our Church knows that he has a ministry in the Church's worship as well as in the Church's work. He is necessary for a full Communion Service; the priest by himself is prohibited from celebrating the Holy Communion. The whole Service suggests a brotherhood, and almost unconsciously the worshipper comes to the truth that as in this Sacrament we are united to Christ we are united with our brethren. We become more truly one Body by being fed sacramentally by his Body. The Cup of Salvation is a common cup; we must drink together because together we enter into his Life. It is a "Sacrament of Unity".

Thus the Prayer Book teaches us the meaning of the Holy Communion; it also teaches us what we must do in preparation for that holy feast. The requirements are faith, repentance and charity. "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life . . . draw near with faith." This is the same teaching that we received in the Catechism. "It is required of persons who come to the Lord's Supper, to examine themselves, whether they repent them

truly of thir former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men." The three long Exhortations in the Service of Holy Communion repeat this counsel in more detail.

I wonder if we understand why faith is necessary in this, as in all our relationships with God. It is plain common sense. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). There is need for faith in our human relationships. In marriage, for instance, the man and woman cannot *prove* that their union will be successful; their marriage is an act of faith. The need for faith in our approach to God is the greater because we cannot see him and therefore we find him (or rather we are found of him) only when we take that step into the unknown which men call faith.

Before we can pray, we must have thought about God, listened to the testimony to him in the Bible and in the lives of the saints, and have come to a *faith* that there is One to hear our prayer. Otherwise the prayer will be empty; you cannot pray to a Perhaps. Before the Holy Communion can be a blessing we must believe that

Christ is the Living Christ, and that he can and will make himself known in the Breaking of the Bread. Our faith does not perform the miracle of the Divine Presence; the living Christ is with his Church whether we know it or not. Our faith is merely the door that we must open that he may come and dwell with us. And even our faith, we soon come to see, is a gift from God. The door that we open has really been opened by Christ.

As faith is necessary, so also is charity. It is again plain common sense. A heart that is bitter with enmity cannot find room for the God of Love. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 3:14 and 4:8).

That is the truth behind one of the stern provisions of the Prayer Book. "The same order shall the Curate use with those betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's Table, until he know them to be reconciled."

Once a woman came to me with this very problem. Her husband had done a grave wrong to their daughter and she could not forget it. She dared not come to the Holy Communion feeling

as she did. There was only one counsel to give her. If she was not ready to surrender her resentment, she must not seek the Sacrament of the Divine Charity. If, however, in intention she was ready to forgive, if she would pray earnestly for her husband and desire only the best for him, she could come seeking the forgiving power of Christ to fill her heart with the spirit of forgiveness. Part of her difficulty was that she thought that forgiveness meant treating the offence lightly, but it can never mean that for the Christian. At the very least thoughts like these must be in her heart: "The injury that he did our child was wrong, and so I must judge it. But I cannot judge *him*. I could not do the kind of thing he did. I find it difficult to understand how he could do it. But there are other things which I have done which are sin. I want God to forgive me; how can I ask forgiveness for myself if I do not ask it for him? I find him hard to understand, but, Lord, help me to understand as you understand."

In truth, the charity with which we come to the Holy Communion must always be in a penitent charity because it is so poor a charity. None of the things we offer God, neither our faith nor our repentance nor our charity, is enough to merit this rich blessing. Here is the answer to a difficulty

that many have felt. I am not good enough, they say. If I can only come in faith and penitence and charity, I dare not come at all. But listen to the Prayer Book. "If any man say, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am afraid to come: wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse yourselves, and say ye are not ready?"

Here we come to the meaning of repentance, but it is such a great subject, and so important for the Christian life, that we must devote the next chapter to it. At this point we merely note that repentance, with faith and charity, are a part of our share in the offering of Christ as we come to the Altar of God. They are never good enough; but unless we bring the little we have we cannot be filled with Christ and in him find a fuller trust and contrition and love.

In this chapter I have endeavoured to keep to those truths about the Holy Communion which are plainly set forth in our Prayer Book. Yet I would cherish the hope that the Christian, as he comes regularly to this Service, will learn more and more from it, will find it illuminating and strengthening his whole life. In the bread he may

come to see the symbol of man's toil and in the wine the symbol of man's joys. He will see them offered, along with his alms and other oblations, those money gifts which are a sacrifice that the most earth-bound among us can understand. He will see them offered in Christ, as later in the Service, it is only in Christ that we offer "ourselves, our souls and bodies." Thus he will come to see Christ on His Cross, holding up to the Father the whole of Creation and the whole life of man as an offering of love and obedience. The loving heart of God is satisfied when the world is seen by him through the Cross. So the Father accepts and transforms all of creation because it is shown forth in his Son. The Bread, man in his daily life, becomes the Body of Christ. The Wine, man in his joys and his dreams, becomes the Blood, the Life of Christ. All life is transfigured because Christ was born, was crucified, and rose triumphant. So we go from our Communion out into life. Our eating, drinking, working, playing are touched by the hand of Christ and transformed into the service of God and the brotherly love of his children.

THE WAY OF PENITENCE

We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.

The General Confession at Morning Prayer.

The incarnation means very little, the Kingdom of God is a mere delusion, if there be not a voice speaking from heaven as well as one crying from earth; if the one be not an answer to the other, if the minister may not say to the congregation, "God heard your petitions, rise up as pardoned men, with strength to offer up praises and prayers, with strength to do your work," the confession is but half real, the Gospel is not real at all.—

The Kingdom of Christ, Part II, Page 118.

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THE WAY OF PENITENCE

IN the letter which set me thinking out the ideas now expressed in these chapters, there was this sentence: "Regularly I joined in the General Confession but never thought about any specific sins." There is perhaps a danger that this is all people will learn from the Prayer Book about repentance, but if so it is only because they have never opened that book but have been content to listen, perhaps with inattentive ear, to the Exhortations at Morning and Evening Prayer and at the Holy Communion. But besides these, there is in the Prayer Book a great deal of careful instruction about repentance.

In the Service of Holy Baptism we are told that to follow Christ means first that we must "die from sin and rise again into righteousness". That is the decisive step, when by the grace of God we

are delivered from the Way of Death and are placed upon the Way of Life. But this step is not the end of the matter. The Prayer Book adds that we must be "continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living". This means that the Christian life involves a continued dying and being born again. We become Christ's disciples, but every moment of our lives there is the temptation to desert him. So St. Paul, in writing to the "saints" in such cities as Corinth, must continually rebuke them for sin, recall them to their high calling, and urge them to repentance. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is clearly in difficulty as he strives to understand how those who are in Christ could yet act as traitors to Christ.

From time to time in these chapters we have used the analogy of life as a journey, and have spoken of the Anglican Way. Perhaps we can see the Christian life as setting out on a pilgrimage, the Church Militant here in earth as the company of pilgrims, and Christ as our Guide and Companion on the pilgrimage. We may be pilgrims, but we act more like sheep. We do not always heed the Shepherd's voice. At each stage in the journey, at the day's end, we find that we have

wandered, perhaps with other pilgrims, perhaps by ourselves. We are dangerously far from our Guide. If we start out on the next stage of the journey without returning to our Guide, we begin to lose our way completely. It is essential for our journey's success that we keep coming back to Christ. This return to him is the daily repentance to which the Christian is called. Thus we are "continually mortifying our evil and corrupt affections". And if we do not do that, soon we lose sight of our Guide and of the company of pilgrims. We have become "Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad". *Then* we need conversion. Some one must seek us and find us and by the Word of the Gospel call us and restore us to the Way.

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this daily call to repentance. Failure to understand this need, and to heed this call is behind many of the desertions from the Church and from Christ. All of us forget God and go our own way; each day it happens to a greater or lesser degree. As it happens each day, it is essential that each day we should return to the loving heart of God. Postpone it for one day and it will be harder to do the next day. We see this in human relationships. If a husband and wife are estranged, the longer they persist in their quarrel, the more

difficult is their reconciliation. And the longer we put off the call to repentance, the more impossible it becomes. Finally, we are in habitual sin, and have shut ourselves off from the love of God. It is not a conventional phrase but a vital principle which is expressed at Morning and Evening Prayer when we are told that “we ought *at all times* to acknowledge our sins before God.”

But how are we to go about it? The strange fact in the Gospels is that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ seems to impose no conditions for the receiving of God’s forgiveness, except the forgiving spirit in our own souls. “Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive* them that trespass against us.” The father of the Prodigal Son did not wait in stately dignity for the stammering confession of the lad. “When he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him” (Luke 11:20) — all this *before* the confession.

Such is the love of God. There is a price for forgiveness, but he has paid it himself on the Cross. Some have noticed that there is nothing about the Cross in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But the Cross was there — hidden in the father’s heart. As for us, the invitation is: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,

and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isiah 55:1).

But though God's forgiveness is free, our human nature is such that there are steps that we must take as we reach forward for this loving, free forgiveness. They are laid down for us in the rest of the New Testament, and in the Prayer Book we have this Biblical method of returning to the love of God, given to us in one of the Exhortations in the Holy Communion.

1. *Acceptance of Christ's standard is necessary*

We must, says the Exhortation, "Examine our lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments." Some of us never achieve repentance because we do not really accept God's commandments. We want in some way to be near to God but in our hearts we do not really believe that He expects righteousness. Our thought is more like the verse:

Have mercy on me, O Lord God,
On me, poor Martin Elginbrodd,
As I would do if I were God
And thou wert Martin Elginbrodd.

This is one of the most disastrous mistakes we can make. The heart of God is a flame of love, but

it is also a flame of righteousness. The path that Christ will lead us along is the path of the commandments. In our souls we must face the inescapable fact that the Way of Life is a Way of Holiness. This call to daily penitence is in part a daily learning of the truth that God can never be content, and therefore we can never be content, until we have been "made like unto Christ".

2. Self-knowledge is essential

"Search and examine your own consciences, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God." This again is a requirement that makes some men despair. How can they ever truly know themselves? Our capacity for self-deception is limitless. We have often smiled at our friends when they indulged in self-analysis — they were so obviously wrong. Our friends have smiled at us too.

Many will remember the little communicants' manual that they were given when they were confirmed. They probably tried to use the forms for self-examination included therein, at least for a time. I am always in doubt as to the value of these forms. Too often they seem to bring to our minds only our surface sins. They may help us to remember the occasions on which we have lost our temper, lied, or committed some other specific

sin. But will they help us to get to the real reason behind these actions? Besides, there are many decent people who could claim a clean bill of health by the external test of the Ten Commandments; yet, like the rich young ruler, they have turned away from God.

In one of the poems of Studdert-Kennedy a cockney soldier tells of a dream in which he saw himself on Judgment Day, standing before Jesus Christ:

It seemed to me as though 'Is face
Were millions rolled in one;
It never changed yet always changed,
Like the sea beneath the sun.
'Twere all men's face yet no man's face,
A face no man could see,
And it seemed to say in silent speech,
"Ye did 'em all to me.
The dirty things ye did to 'em,
The filth ye thought was fine,
Ye did 'em all to Me" . . . it said,
"For all their souls were mine."
And then at last 'E said one word,
'E just said one word — "Well?"
And I said in a funny voice,
"Please can I go to 'Ell?"

That is the language of penitence, of the self-knowledge which comes when we see ourselves in the Mirror of Christ. It is good to use forms for self-examination, as long as they help us to do this essential thing. It is good to remember and confess specific sins as long as we do not stop there. If our self-knowledge is incomplete, and it always is, that need not destroy our penitence unless we are refusing to face what we can at present know about ourselves.

There can be no penitence if we repress the knowledge of our worst moments, and go through a mental process like this: "*I could not be thinking this thought or feeling this emotion; it is too nasty or too evil even to contemplate.*" Then we hurriedly chase it out of consciousness into some locked cupboard or cellar of the soul. But it is still there — unseen, not accepted, and therefore unconfessed and unforgiven.

3. Self judgment is necessary

Once we have faced all of ourselves that we have the insight to see, our responsibility for all this must be accepted. The next step is to say "I have sinned." Others may make excuses for us but we dare not make excuses for ourselves. Since the Freudian revolution in psychology, we know a great deal more about the unconscious

forces which are the real motives for our deeds. The reason that a man is an alcoholic or an adulterer or a hypocrite goes back into his childhood. But even if a man comes to understand, with psychiatric help, the complex emotions which have driven him to his sins, he must, if he would remain a man, accept responsibility for those sins. There is no point in him loathing himself without knowing why he is so loathsome to himself, but once insight has been won, there must still be self-judgment. Each one of us must say in his own time, "Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son."

4. *Confession is necessary*

Let me again repeat that this requirement stands, not because God in wounded holiness demands it but because only in confession can we move towards forgiveness. I must be ready to stand before God as I am before he may make me what I yet may be. In the Garden of Eden, Adam said, "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." There is no forgiveness for us while we are repeating Adam's words. Only when we know our nakedness and that we must stand thus, before ourselves, before others if necessary, and certainly before God, can God clothe us in

the mantle of His love. "I have sinned" is a necessary word.

The Prayer Book gives us three methods by which we may say this word. First, it may be done in the privacy of our personal prayer. The Prayer Book makes it clear that whatever other method we may use in confession, this personal confession must ever be present in our lives.

The second method is to join with the Church in the General Confession at public worship. This method too is unavoidable. However earnestly I may have confessed in my private prayer, when I come to worship God I come as a sinner who has hurt the Church and weakened it by being an unprofitable child of the Church. I cannot worship, the Church cannot worship, unless together we confess our corporate guilt. And these Confessions of the Prayer Book are the cry of Universal Man. "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us" — prince and peasant, rich man and poor man, scholar and dullard, saint and derelict, all can and must say these words together. One day in Christ we all shall be one; already in Christ we are learning to be one. But at present one fact

unites all mankind: we are sinners in need of forgiveness.

The third method of confession suggested to us in the Prayer Book is confession before a priest. There are different opinions in our Church about this method, but I am concerned here not with what I personally think about it, or what one of the parties in the Church says about it, but with what the Prayer Book plainly teaches. "And because it is requisite, that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and a quiet conscience; therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness." Again in the Visitation of the Sick, it is provided that the minister shall examine the sick person to be sure that he has "repented him truly of his sins". After this the Rubrics go on to say, "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled of any

weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and truly desire it)."

The teaching of the Prayer Book about confession before a priest has been summarized by someone thus: All may; none must; some should. This way of confessing is available to us all, if our conscience calls us to it. It is compulsory for none of us. But there are some of us who need it. Such, says the Prayer Book, are those who are truly repentant yet still cannot believe that God forgives them. They need to hear the authoritative voice of the Church declaring that in Christ we *are* forgiven, that is precisely what he came to do. If I may introduce one personal opinion here, I would add that there is another class of penitent who needs to use this method. There are those whose confession is unreal because, though they utter the word of confession, they have not really faced their sin. When such people realize that a man, even if he be a priest, is hearing what they have done, then they at last really see it themselves, and are ready to lay it before God. And when the priest, hearing their sin, does not drive them from him but instead speaks the word of absolution, they awaken to the reality of the forgiving love of God.

5. *God-confidence is necessary*

It is the penitent who finds it hard to believe that God can and will forgive. He has really been looking at himself as he is, and, like Studdert-Kennedy's cockney soldier, he feels that hell is the place in which he deserves to be. For most of us the need is to learn repentance; we treat our sins lightly and seem to enjoy them. But every parish priest knows the few who become anxious and self-distrustful precisely because they are in earnest about their lives.

When a priest is ordained, the bishop solemnly speaks to him in Christ's own words: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." It is impossible to over-emphasize this commission of the Church and of the ministry. What did Christ come into the world for, if not to set men free? In the synagogue at Nazareth he read the words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). And he declared that that prophecy was fulfilled in him. "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

Therefore the Church must go forth and in Christ's name proclaim to men their freedom, won at such cost by such a loving Saviour. Her word to all men, whatever their condition, is this: "You are free. If sin still enslaves you, your bonds are self-imposed. If Satan is a tyrant over you, his power is only what you have given him. If you are groping in darkness you have only to open your eyes and you may see. By the authority of Christ committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

6. *Amendment and restitution are necessary*

This forgiveness, so graciously given, has its consequences. We cannot keep our sin while we are claiming God's love. We cannot keep the consequences of our sin.

Therefore the Prayer Book tells us that our repentance involves a "full purpose of amendment of life". This worries many people. They have a rueful knowledge that their sins of yesterday are their sins of today and they fear that they will be their sins of tomorrow. They may be, but it is not inevitable. There is always the challenge to believe in God's power, even while we recognize our own weakness. The essential thing is to keep up the struggle. Once we give in and resign

ourselves to living with our failures, we lose the way to forgiveness. This sin of mine may defeat me now and tomorrow, but the Cross is omnipotent and it will prevail.

As for restitution, "if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other." Sometimes it is our agonizing experience to awake to our sin too late to make restitution; the person we have injured has gone beyond our reach. Then we have to pray that the mercy of God will heal the wounds that we have caused. Sometimes, too, our wrong to someone else has not been realized by that person. Then we may have to keep silent when open confession would be a relief. I know of one man who, coming to repentance, confessed to his wife that he had been unfaithful to her. But she had been completely ignorant of it before, and the confession broke up the home. All the man had done was to transfer his cross to his wife's shoulders and she was not strong enough to bear it. But when all these cautions about restitution have been given, it still remains true that

restitution, where possible, is essential. If I have stolen a thousand dollars, or gained that sum by dishonest means, I cannot repent me of the theft and continue to enjoy the thousand dollars.

There is one further word that needs to be said about repentance and forgiveness. The Holy Communion is by some people found to be the supreme method for seeking the forgiveness of God. For there, as they come in penitence and faith, the living Christ comes to them. Their prayer at the Eucharist is this: "Cast out my sin, and enter in." To be forgiven is to be restored to God; and what better way is there than the Sacrament of the Body and the Blood?

So the Prayer Book Christian learns his lessons about the journey to which he is called. Every day he may wander, so every day he must return to his Guide. His penitence in public worship and as he comes to the Holy Communion is real, because each day he has been a penitent, a prodigal son who has arisen and returned to his Father.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

Easter Day (on which the rest depend) is always the first Sunday after the Full Moon which happens upon, or next after, the Twenty-first day of March; and if the Full Moon happens upon a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday after.

The Book of Common Prayer. Introduction.

These forms invite us on certain days to remember our Lord's acts, condescension, humiliation, triumph. They teach us that if we forget the days, we shall be in danger of forgetting that of which they speak, and therefore of sinking back into that dark, idolatrous, divided state, out of which by Christ's work we have been brought.

The Kingdom of Christ, Part II, pages 41-2

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THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

W. Macneile Dixon has expressed his dissatisfaction with the "one-eyed" philosophies — those which seize on one truth and try to make it explain everything in the universe. There are one-eyed theologies too. Listen to the radio on any Sunday and you will hear men who have only one sermon to preach. You must be born again; the end of this world is near — proclamations like this are repeated and repeated because that is all these preachers have to say. We need not be contemptuous; others, no doubt, notice the same tendency in us. Once I looked over the sermons I had preached in the first two years of my ministry. I found that there were two or three pet ideas which, whatever the stated theme of each sermon, I had managed to bring in with a remarkable if unconscious skill. There are men

for whom Christmas is the whole Gospel. It is enough for them that God became man; they seem to think but little of the Cross on which God Incarnate had to suffer and die. There are others for whom the Cross is the whole Gospel; Christmas and Easter do not enter effectively into their real belief.

The best protection against such partial understandings of the Gospel is the Church Year. There the whole faith of the whole Church is proclaimed step by step. We may be living in a time when the end of the world and the Day of Judgment are unpopular themes, but none the less we must keep the season of Advent. We may be children of an age which treats sin lightly and blandly ignores the tragedy of life. Yet the Church year confronts us with the penitence of Lent and the triumphant tragedy of Good Friday. Or we may be overwhelmed by a world of troubles and share the helpless sorrow of our brothers in affliction. Still the Church Year calls upon us to rejoice in the great Forty Days of the Easter Feast and to shout Alleluia because Christ is risen. Many times the Church has tended to forget the Holy Spirit and His work in our souls, but each year Whitsunday comes around and calls upon us to consider him who is the soul of the Church.

In many small communities in Canada it is impossible to have a Service every Sunday. Indeed, I have found some places where the people have grown accustomed to Church once a month, and if it becomes possible to offer them more frequent Services they are reluctant to accept the change. In such a situation it is very difficult to lead the people into a living knowledge of all that God has done for them. But, with a little imagination it can be achieved. I know one isolated parish, served for years by a lay reader with only occasional visits from the clergy. This lay reader understands the importance of the Church Year. His people cannot get a priest for Christmas Day; very well, they ask the bishop to come on the Sunday before Christmas and celebrate the Christmas Festival with them a few days ahead of time. No priest is available on Easter Day; but they can wait and observe Good Friday and Easter a week later. Thus the people of that community are growing into the fulness of the faith.

A significant number of Church members have fallen away from the regular habit of weekly church-going, even where it is possible. They do not realize that because of this the Gospel comes to them in broken bits and pieces. It is like trying to read intelligently a continued story in a

magazine when you miss two or three issues. It would be good advice if at the end of each Sunday's worship we said to the people: "Don't miss the next instalment!"

But so far I have spoken of the Church Year only as a means of proclaiming the full news of redemption. We cannot stop there. William Addison, in his book "The English Country Parson", has a chapter on old village customs in England. As we read of these customs, we can see how in the old days the people knew instinctively that their redemption is achieved in the actual world of farming, business, commerce, home-making and play. The villagers paid their quarterly rents on days named after the Church Festival that fell on that day, such as Michaelmas (St. Michael and All Angels' Day). The sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest were the occasion for many customs in which the Church played its part. Rogationtide, for instance, meant the procession around the parish with prayers for God's blessing upon the fields. Also, in some parishes, they took care to bump some unfortunate victim at the parish boundary, in order to impress clearly where those boundaries were.

Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, simnel cakes on Mothering Sunday, hot cross buns on Good Friday,

eggs on Easter Day — all these must have helped to teach the scripture lessons of those days. I can well remember how impressed I was in my early years when I heard that housewives were in the habit of making their Christmas puddings after the Sunday next before Advent. In the services of that day they heard the Collect, "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people . . . , " and they were reminded that they must stir up the pudding. "Stir-up Sunday" always had a special meaning for me; because I had heard of the quaint old custom, I could not forget the spiritual message of the day.

No doubt the spiritual realities of the Church Year and the earthy humour and feastings made a strange mixture. But William Addison, as he describes these customs, shows how "throughout the year, from Advent to Advent, the country parson led his people through the months, telling them the story of the redemption of mankind." He adds the remarks: "Every simple cottager, as he sat in his village church, had a sense of the ideal world strangely mingled with his own world of field and orchard." The Gospel message was remembered because the village customs gave such enjoyment. Professor Amos Wilder, in a book recently published, says that "the one great and

telling charge made against the Christian religion in the modern period is that it is other-worldly, escapist, and irrelevant to the problems of this life." If there is any truth in the charge, one reason is the loss of these old customs.

Today about the only one left (and in its present observance it is fairly modern) is the Harvest Festival. In the country it has real meaning, but it is just as popular in the city. When my work was in Canada's Capital I used to wish that we could bring filing cabinets to Church instead of sheaves of wheat, for that is what so many of my people worked with day by day. But there would have been a great outcry if I had tried it. People feel instinctively the artificiality of so much of our city life, and the appeal of the Harvest Festival is its naturalness. Even though they have deserted the farm, people know that on the farm they meet reality.

Here in the country's heart
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er hath been.
Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with a thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall —
That is the country faith,
And the best of all!

I could wish that we showed more imagination in linking the Church year to our town and country life in this twentieth century. It is no use pining for the customs of old England; we shall have to develop our own. And it can be done. Dean Burke of Vancouver, when he was in Ottawa used to mark St. Matthew's Day as Civil Servants' Day. The publicans were civil servants of the Roman Empire. If the civil servants of Ottawa were not flattered by the comparison, they knew the special temptations of their calling, and the humour implicit in the observance helped to give point to the festival. The Roman Catholic Church has shown wisdom in observing the Feast of St. Joseph the Carpenter on May Day in Europe, and on the first Sunday in September in America. Thus the example of Saint Joseph is brought forward at the very time, on each continent, when Labour is thinking of its hopes and aspirations. Would it not be wise to have a doctor read the Lessons on St. Luke's Day or on the nearest Sunday?

But even if it is a slow process integrating again our common life and our worship, the Christian may find himself learning that the Church Year speaks to him and his condition. He may not understand the Advent Lessons; the prospect of the end of the world may be only a puzzle to him. But he will *feel* the essential Advent lesson, which is this: "Prepare to meet thy God." Christmas will speak to him of God's great love and of Christ's nearness, Epiphany may lead him to worship like the Wise Men. He is almost certain to make some use of Lent; it is the one season that we Anglicans have really made something of. I am continually surprised by the discovery that people who are not conspicuously faithful Churchmen are really observing Lent — a business man giving up his cocktail before dinner or his cigar, a stenographer resolving to attend the Eucharist or the Lenten Noonday Services daily.

Good Friday speaks to us of our sin and its price. Easter proclaims Christ's victory, a living Lord, and our eternal hope. Whitsunday reminds us that the Holy Spirit is with us, a Guide and Comforter, and Friend. Always, in the Church Year, there is first the proclamation of what God has done; but then comes the thought of what we

must do in loving response to the great love of God.

If the clergy are wise, they will give their people names for the different Sundays and Seasons of the year. Slowly the Christian will find himself learning a calendar something like this:

The First Sunday in Advent: Alarm-clock Sunday (from the Epistle: "Now is it high time to awake out of sleep.").

The Second Sunday in Advent: Bible Sunday.

The Third Sunday in Advent: The Ministry Sunday.

Christmas Day: Christmas Presents.

Epiphany: The Call to Missionary work.

The Purification: Candlemas (A light to lighten the Gentiles).

The Sunday before Septuagesima: Farewell to Alleluias (The beginning of a penitential season — see Hymn No. 100).

Septuagesima: Creation Sunday (From the Lessons at Mattins and Evensong).

Sexagesima: Social Service Sunday.

Quinquagesima: The Day of Charity.

Shrove Tuesday: Pancakes.

Ash Wednesday.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent: Refreshment Sunday (From the Gospel of the Feeding of the 5,000) or

Mothering Sunday. ("Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.")

The Fifth Sunday in Lent: Passion Sunday.

Palm Sunday.

The Thursday before Easter: Maundy Thursday ("A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.")

Good Friday: Hot Cross Buns.

Easter Day: Easter Eggs.

Second Sunday after Easter: Good Shepherd Sunday.

Fifth Sunday after Easter: Rogation Sunday (Prayer for the Harvest.)

The Ascension Day

The Sunday after Ascension Day: Expectation Sunday (The disciples were waiting for the promised Holy Spirit.)

Whitsunday: The Holy Spirit's Day.

Trinity Sunday: The Sunday of Worship (We worship one God in Trinity.)

First Sunday in September: Labour Sunday.

Third Sunday in October: Christian Education Sunday.

Saint Andrew's Day: Pray for Missions.

Saint Thomas' Day: The Patron Saint of Doubters.

Saint Barnabas' Day: The Christian Gentleman.

Saint John the Baptist's Day: The French-Canadian's Festival.

Saint Swithun's Day: Is it going to rain?

Saint Matthew's Day: Civil Servant Day.

Saint Michael and All Angels: The Ministry of the Angels.

St. Luke the Evangelist: The Doctor-Saint.

All Saints' Day: Our Fellowship with the Departed.

The Sunday next before Advent: Stir Up Sunday.

There is admittedly a great variety in the above suggestions. In some a Gospel truth is emphasized, in some an old Christian custom, in some a present-day concern, and in others there is a human touch of humour. But that is the way the Church Year developed. It was not planned; like Topsy, "it just grewed." And the result is that heaven and earth interact, and the Christian cannot forget either. His present journey is *through this world*, and he is called to love it because it is God's world. But he must not forget the goal of his journey. He must not grow so fond of this world that he finds himself

echoing St. Peter's words at the Transfiguration; "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make tabernacles." Nor must he grow so angry at all the evils of this world that he demands the Kingdom of Heaven now. He must journey but he must also see his goal. We were made for heaven, and we shall never rest until we are there. But the materials out of which heaven is constructed are the joys and the sorrows, the victories and the loves of our life here on earth. So from Christian Year to Christian Year we journey towards him and with him whom the Christian Year proclaims.

A Note on Fasting.

I had finished this chapter on the Christian Year before I realized that I had not dealt with the question of fasting. On Page lviii of the Introduction to the Prayer Book, there appears "A Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence to be observed in the year." It is an impressive list: the eves or vigils of Festivals, the Forty Days of Lent, the Ember Days, the Rogation Days, and all the Fridays of the year (except Christmas when it falls on a Friday.) In 1957 there will be 100 Days of Fasting or Abstinence — this figure allows for duplications.

Now there are two important facts:

1. This rule of fasting has appeared in every Prayer Book since 1549.
2. Over a period of four hundred years, it has not won the obedience of more than a minority of Church members.

Then what of the great majority, who ignore these Days of Fasting? Are they disloyal to their Church? We must realize, first, that it is impossible to enforce suddenly a rule that has not been obeyed for so long a time. We cannot suddenly confront our people with it and demand obedience. Nor can we dismiss it with a smile, as Sydney Smith did. "The Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England," he said, "are tolerably well kept on the whole. The rich keep the feasts and the poor the fasts." The rule remains in our Prayer Book, and challenges us to give it thought. The reasons why it is not followed are not wholly bad. Our people feel instinctively that Christianity is not a religion of rules. They feel that to make it so would be to return to the religion of the Pharisees.

However much we may sympathize with such feelings, it would be disastrous to let our sympathy lead us astray. Admittedly rules can never be the heart of a living religion. The important need is to get into a right relationship with God, — then

the rules will take care of themselves. But the rules will still be there. John Wesley had his great experience in Aldersgate Street and went out to convert the people of England. Those he converted became a society and *then* Wesley worked out his "Rules for the Society of People called Methodists". The rules did not redeem, but they were the outward expression of the redeemed life.

It is impossible to explain away the references to fasting in the Bible. If we never fast, our religion differs from the religion of the New Testament. The New Testament is bursting with joy, but it is the joy of those who have denied themselves and taken up their cross and followed Christ. Moreover, the Church has the right and the duty to establish rules. If everybody went his own way there would be no fellowship.

The Christian cannot avoid self-denial and self-discipline. If, following the Prayer Book, he makes Fridays and the forty days of Lent his chief days of self-denial, his practice will ever remind him of his Lord. For forty days Christ fasted in the wilderness, and on a Friday he hung upon the Cross.

As for abstaining from meat on Fridays, there a great deal to be said for it, apart from considerations of simple obedience. The refrigerating

methods of to-day make fish an attractive dish, even far inland. "I like fasting," said one of my rectors, by which he meant that he liked fish!

But if abstaining from meat is no great hardship at least it is a token and a reminder. If we do nothing else on a Fast Day, it is probably of little value. If, however, it is linked with penitent prayer and solemn thoughts of our Lord's sacrifice, every Friday and every Lent becomes a part of the rhythm of penitence and rejoicing that you find in any truly Christian life. The Glad Days and the Sad Days of the Christian Year together give us the true mood of the redeemed society — victory through sacrifice, the joy of those who have mourned.

. . . To do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.

The Catechism.

We contend that every Christian should believe himself called to every work in which he engages; and that except he believe this, the work will be unholy and cheerless, pursued without confidence in God or any expectation of high and worthy fruit.

The Kingdom of Christ II, 95-6.

12

EVERY DAY WORK AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

IT follows from the fact that our pilgrimage to the heart of God is a journey through this world that all that we do in this world must serve that end. We cannot departmentalize life in such a way that a part of it becomes our religion, while the rest of our time is given to worldly affairs. It is our duty to give some of the hours of each day to activities like prayer or public worship. It is easy to see that in these we walk with Christ and are guided by the Holy Spirit. But it also is our duty to enter into human relationships, and in the home, the community, and the nation to serve our brother man. We must learn to see this too as a walk with Christ under the Spirit's guidance. It is moreover our privilege to devote a part of the day to ourselves, to purely personal pursuits. But

they become mere selfishness unless in those hours we are still walking with Christ and following where the Holy Spirit leads.

In the Prayer Book there is recognition of this truth, and provision for God's blessing upon us in the daily round of work, and especially in life's great moments. The essential principle suggested in the Prayer Book is that all we do in life is done in response to the call of God, and that he always gives us the Divine assistance necessary for what he has asked us to do. That principle was implicit in our Confirmation. There we faced the call to take up the full responsibilities of the Christian life, and there God called us to Church, where by prayer and the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit came upon us with the spiritual power necessary for the Christian life. So also in other moments. If a king is to be crowned or a priest ordained; if a man and woman are to be married; if a woman rises from child-birth to take up the work of her home again; if men go to sea, to risk their lives in its perils; if sickness comes — for all these events there is provision in the Prayer Book, and the provision is fundamentally the same for each. We are called to Church worship that through that worship we may offer this particular calling or experience to God, and, also in that

worship, seek and find God's special grace to do what we must do.

I.

The young Christian goes out into the world. He may from earliest childhood have felt the urge to do some particular work — to be a doctor, or an engineer, or a teacher. He may have found it hard to make up his mind; his life-work may eventually be chosen because only one door seems to be open for him. But if he has been well taught, he knows that through the combined influence of his abilities, his interests, and his opportunities, God has called him to some particular work.

The Church could not possibly provide in its Prayer Book for Services commissioning all men and women as they begin their work as mechanics, bricklayers, doctors, dentists, carpenters, stenographers, teachers, salesmen, accountants, and the countless other occupations that they engage in. The Church provides for the coronation of the monarch, because his calling is vital for the life of the nation, and for the ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, because their ministry is vital for the Church. But young men and women who are entering upon other occupations can read those Services and realize that, as God accepts and provides for the ministry of kings and of

priests, he accepts and provides for the work of all mankind. If it is done as his service, it will be done in his grace.

The Bidding Prayer shows the Church's attitude to man's daily work. In that prayer we are called upon to pray for the Queen and the Royal family, for all Christian ministries, for the Parliaments and for all who bear authority, "that all of them in their several callings may serve truly and faithfully to the glory of God, and the edifying and well-governing of his people; remembering always the strict and solemn account which they must one day give before the judgment seat of Christ." Moreover, this prayer goes on to say, "And that there may never be wanting a supply of persons duly qualified to serve God both in Church and State, let us implore his blessing on all schools, and universities, and seminaries of religious and useful learning, that in these and in all places set apart for God's honour and service, true religion and sound learning may forever flourish."

These social implications of our Christian faith are perhaps obscured in the Prayer Book because it reflects a social situation that has long since disappeared. The Prayer Book we use to-day is but little changed from the prayer books used in 1662. And while this means a great gain in the

continuity of worship, it may also mean a loss in relevance to life, unless from time to time there is that wise kind of revision which keeps all that is good in the old while making it have meaning today. What, for instance, do children today make of the Catechism, when it calls upon them "to submit myself to all governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters"? We have already quoted the Rubric, which reads almost quaintly today: "And all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, Mistresses, and Guardians, shall cause their children, servants, apprentices, and wards to come to such instruction at the time appointed." Imagine what success would meet the few housewives who still have servants, if they tried to trot their maid off to Catechism Class!

But despite this, there is a social message in the Prayer Book. It accepted the social situation of England in the seventeenth century, a situation in which the king had tremendous powers and all society was graded into classes, but it called upon both the great and the lowly to serve their God. Its message of social justice came in almost incidentally. For instance, the one reason why one regrets the disappearance of the "Curses" of the Communion Office is that they were stern warn-

ings to those who were failing to treat their neighbour in Christ's way. "Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's land mark" is a warning still relevant in these days when slick real-estate deals are not unknown. "Cursed is he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow," is a curse upon the stock-selling methods sometimes employed.

Admittedly, the social situation reflected in the Prayer Book has made it easy for the Anglican Church to look like "the Conservative Party at prayer." But there is another tradition, represented by men like Frederick Denison Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Henry Scott Holland, Charles Gore and William Temple. They were Prayer Book Christians, all of them, and they stood for social and economic reform.

Nothing, perhaps, is more needed in this mechanistic and secularized age, than Christian teaching about our vocation in our work and in our social relationships. It would take a whole book to deal with this subject adequately. Here I must content myself with what is said above, only seeking to emphasize one point. When we learn to accept our daily work as a divine calling, it is possible for the social implications of the Gospel to work their way into our minds and

hearts. We must begin with this Prayer Book teaching of vocation as we seek to know the mind of Christ in our economic and political life.

II.

In time there may come to the Christian another call from God—the call to marriage. We live in an age when the cheaply sentimental view of love is magnified in popular songs, on radio and television, and in the movies. Being “in love” is presented to us as everything, and it is easy for people to be wholly blind to the real meaning of love as a giving of the whole personality. But if a young man and a young woman are earnestly trying to serve their God, they will realize that their attraction for each other may, by God’s blessing, become a deep, mutual self-giving so complete that they will indeed become “one flesh”.

They come to Church, and in the Solemnization of Matrimony take each other as man and wife, and the Church blesses their union. In that Service the Church holds out to them the Christian meaning of marriage, and they accept it. Their physical attraction for each other, their delight in each other’s company, is “hallowed”—it is made holy because it is offered to God.

Their marriage is for life; they accept each

other "till death us do part." Whatever we may think of divorce as a relief for the marriages that fail, we must hold to the Christian conviction that no marriage *need* fail, that God gives sufficient grace for every marriage to be a success. In all marriages there is the discovery that one's partner is not perfect. In the necessary intimacies of living together there are irritations and annoyances. If God is forgotten, they become intolerable. It is these irritations, and not adultery, that are the chief cause of broken marriages. But when one's life partner is accepted, thankfully and in the presence of God, and the intention to make this marriage work is real, divorce is actually unthinkable.

The Christian man and wife also hope and pray that children will be the fruit of their physical union. Whatever we may think of contraceptives (and there are sincere differences of opinion about them among Christian thinkers) there is one use of contraceptives which every Christian must condemn. If through fear or selfishness a married couple avoid the birth of children, their marriage is incomplete and they are not doing God's will. The only use of contraceptives that can be justified on any Christian view is when a Christian couple still hope for and

make possible as many children as the wife's health and the husband's finances can bear — and are willing to let Christian faith and not worldly caution govern their decisions.

III.

So into the Christian home is born a child. The young mother, who has risked danger and suffered pain for her child's sake, now rises from her bed. But before she takes up life again, the Prayer Book calls upon her to come, as soon as she may, to Church for her "Churching." This lovely old custom seems to be dying out in Canada. In the first twenty years of my ministry I did not have one request for it. It is a simple Service, consisting of psalms and prayers, and it is surely appropriate that after so great an experience, the young mother should come to church to offer her heartfelt gratitude to her heavenly Father.

IV.

I have said that the Prayer Book provides for the offering of all life's great moments to God. Not all these moments are joyous ones; there are darker experiences in life. To most of us, early or late, sickness comes, and the Church has her provision for this experience in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick.

This is the part of our Prayer Book that was

most in need of revision, and in the Draft Canadian Book of 1955, the tone of this Service is greatly changed. As it stands in our present book it reflects a time when medical science was not nearly as far advanced as today, and therefore a time when in every sickness the shadow of death was near. It also reveals the conviction that all sickness is a visitation from God, and may even be regarded as his punishment for our sins.

Now in this view of sickness, the Prayer Book is very close to one strand of teaching in the Bible. The Bible does not hesitate to attribute all the events of life to God, the evils as well as the blessings. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7). We must never forget that God accepts responsibility for the world as it is; it is his world, and ultimately his will is done. But nowadays we realize that this truth needs to be balanced by another truth. Evil and sorrow are the fruit of the rebellion against God in which man is involved. So we are learning to see that in any hospital the will of God is revealed more in the work of the doctors and the nurses than in the sufferings of the patients. His will is life and joy and peace, and only in a secondary sense does he will woe and sorrow for

his children. If behind the Prayer Book Service there were more reflection on the healing miracles of our Lord, its tone would be different.

Yet the remarkable fact is that this old Service of the Visitation of the Sick, for all the limitations of its viewpoint, has given great comfort and strength to generations of suffering folk. Most of us would wish that it had told them more of God's loving care for man. But they accepted their sickness and were sure that God would use it, as he uses all life's experiences, to bless them. They knew that they were sinners, and that they were sorely in need of God's forgiving love. They committed their lives into God's hands, and placed their trust in his mercy. I can remember one old man who was paralysed after a stroke. When I visited him, he asked me to use the "Prayer for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery." He had no illusions about his sickness; he knew he could not live long. And his Prayer Book, which he knew through and through, gave him just the prayer he needed.

There are one or two features of this Service to which I would refer briefly. The first we have already touched upon. The minister is to lead the sick person to repentance and confession of his sins. Our sins are not always the *cause* of our

illness (though they sometimes are); but in sickness as in health, we cannot come to God without repentance. The second point is the good common sense advice that follows. "And if he have not before disposed of his goods, let him then be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his debts, which he oweth, and what is owing unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates whilst they are in health . . . The Minister shall not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability to be liberal to the poor."

As the priest comes into the sick person's house, he is to say "Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it." Many a sick person, by turning to his heavenly Father, has found the peace which enables him to bear his sufferings. Some people think that sickness is a time when it is easy to turn to God. This is not strictly true; the pain and the discomfort may fill our minds so that it is hard to think of anything else. But men have been found of God despite their pain, and indeed through their pain. His peace does rest upon us.

The last point to deal with in this Service is that it provides for the Communion of the sick

person. I have often found that good church members are strangely reluctant to make their Communion at such a time. Possibly the reason is that they have unconsciously absorbed notions of it as a "last rite" before death. But I have also found that when they have once been persuaded to make their Communion, they welcome it henceforth as long as they are ill. What better medicine for the soul than this, our Lord's own Service? And, when we come to that time, what better last rite? Here is a viaticum, a heavenly food to sustain us as we go forward to that mysterious adventure which men call death.

V.

So the Christian lives his life, the Church and her worship ministering to him daily and also in a special way in life's great moments. As he grows older, he grows in grace. He finds that old sins have somehow disappeared, not by his efforts but because of Christ's presence. He finds new sins threatening to enter in. There are the special temptations of old age, as there are special temptations for youth. But if daily he stays close to his Saviour and Companion, if he opens his mind and heart to the sunshine of God's love, there grows in him a spiritual strength and a spiritual beauty which is the fruit of the Spirit. There is nothing

more lovely than the ripeness of Christian character as shown forth in an old man or an old woman. And, alas! There is nothing more distressing than a Christian who has turned sour in old age. But this last need not be, if the daily repentance continues to be our practice.

So, at the last our journey comes to its end. We die. Even then the Church has its ministry for us, and the Prayer Book provides for that ministry. Our body is taken to the church to which it has gone so often before. That body has been the temple of the Holy Spirit; it is right for our brothers in the Church to show it respect ere they lay it in the grave. It will rot to earth and flowers, but somehow it will be continuous with the Resurrection body in which at the Day of the Kingdom we shall be clothed.

There are different opinions about our Burial Office. Some think it too impersonal; there is little direct reference to the one who has departed, and that little is restrained. It is really a scriptural meditation upon death. This may be instinctive kindness to the loved ones who mourn. But our Service has one great feature; it is the same for all men. One of our Canadian prime ministers had died, and the funeral was held in his church. His minister delivered a eulogy which was sincerely

eloquent. As they returned from the funeral, one of the cabinet ministers said, "It was a moving tribute, but give me our Anglican Burial of the Dead. It does not matter who you were; rich man and poor man, great man and obscure man, the Service is the same for all. All are brought to the church in honour and all are laid in the grave in 'sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life'." Within a few days the man who spoke thus was himself dead. And he was taken to church and the Service he loved was read over him, as it would have been over the most obscure parishioner. His earthly pilgrimage was over. He, like all Christians, had been called to the rest of Paradise, to wait in peace for the Day when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned.

The Commination Office.

His Baptism said to him. This is your position; according to the conditions of it you are to live. It will not be any easy life. It will be one of perpetual conflict. You will have a battle not with flesh and blood only, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of spiritual wickedness in high places. But understand the nature of the battle. Your foes are not hindering you from obtaining a blessing; they are hindering you from entering into the fruition of one that has been obtained for you; they will laugh at you for pretending that it is yours; they will tell you that you must not claim it. But in the strength of this covenant you must claim it; otherwise your life will be a lie.

The Kingdom of Christ, Part II, Page 264.

13

LOST AND FOUND

IN these chapters I have attempted to describe the life of the Christian who has been called to walk with Christ in the fellowship of the Anglican Church, and who finds in his Prayer Book the guidance he needs for that journey. I have written as one who cherishes the Prayer Book and has found in its pages heavenly counsel. Yet I have sought not to be a prejudiced advocate. Whenever I felt that there is something needing amendment in the Prayer Book or in our Church life, I have said so. Someone has remarked "The Church of England washes its dirty linen in public; the important fact is that it does get washed."

The Prayer Book's plan for life does not always work. Baptized men may be very evil men. Earnest seekers after truth do not always find it in the Prayer Book. Church members do not always

awake to their great destiny; sometimes they need conversion and may find that conversion outside the Church. We must now examine the causes of these failures.

I.

Sometimes the rejection of the Prayer Book Way is deliberate, and means a conscious rejection of the Christian life. Even those who have walked with Christ may continue with him for a time and then turn away. There was a time in the earthly ministry of Jesus when, according to St. John, "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him," so that Jesus was moved to say to the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" (John 6:6-7). That is the terrifying freedom that God has given us; he allows us, if we will, to desert him.

For this reason some people ask: "Should we baptize infants? Should we not wait until a man is sure before we baptize him?" But that does not solve the problem. Baptists sometimes desert their Lord, just as some Anglicans do. I knew a man who was baptized and confirmed but fell from grace and was dragged into the gutter. He was converted by an evangelical sect, and received "believer's baptism". It was a real conversion; for a number of years he walked with God. But he

fell into the gutter again. The power of Christ restored him again, through the agency of the Oxford Group; and again, for a time, he walked with God. But he fell the third time into hopeless, degrading sin. If we must wait for baptism until we are absolutely sure that we are Christ's, then let us wait until our death-bed, as did the Emperor Constantine.

The dreadful possibility of apostasy is never absent from our lives. But always sin is desertion of Christ, a denial of our true being, a refusal of our destiny. This is true of the first childish lie or fit of temper, and it is true of the calculated lie of old age. Sin can enter in after regeneration, the new birth into Christ which comes with baptism, and sin can enter in after conversion, which is the awakening of the soul to its baptismal destiny.

There is no certain safeguard against this. It happens in every Christian Church and with every method of living the Christian life which has been devised. All that can possibly be done to avoid it is provided in the Prayer Book. We are given companions for our Christian journey; we are called to walk with the Church, the company of pilgrims. We are given church worship, prayer, the Bible, and the Sacraments to keep us steadfast.

We are given a way of penitence, that our wanderings may not lead us wholly astray. More than that cannot be done by any book nor by any other person. Ultimately our Christian life is our own choice, and no one else can make it for us.

II.

There is another way in which the Prayer Book's plan can fail for us. It will fail if it is used by the hypocrite. Again let me hasten to say that this failure is not peculiar to Anglicans; you are liable to find a hypocrite anywhere. Indeed, it may be that there is less hypocrisy in our Anglican Church than in those religious bodies in which the public declaration of Christian joy and Christian victory is expected of all who join. But this should not make us complacent. Hypocrisy, wherever you find it, kills all Christian reality. Hypocrites love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Our Lord says of such men, "They have their reward," one of the most dreadful judgments in the Bible. They practise religion to win the approval of men, and they have the reward of winning approval. They gain what they seek — and lose their way to God.

A young man, caring about religion but weak and self-centred can drift into the hypocrite's use of the Prayer Book. He knows his rector and sees

his faults. He sees other members of the Church, and notices their failures. He begins to persuade himself that it is possible to practise religion without living it. He begins to allow his temptations to overcome him, while still showing faithfulness in his outward religious duties. He finds himself still accepted in the Christian family. He begins to believe that he can get away with it. In brief moments of honesty, he resolves to seek sincerity before his Lord. But he never really faces his Lord, for he is so busy watching the approval of men. He kneels down, but he does not pray. He sings the hymns in Church lustily, but the only praise in his soul is self-praise. He comes to the Altar, not discerning the Lord's body. He is a hypocrite, the helpless victim of his own deception.

Now is there any way in which the Prayer Book's provisions for life make the way of the hypocrite easy? No change in the Prayer Book would be effective against the cleverness of the hypocrite. Through the ages they have shown themselves experts in making a sham of all realities.

But there is one way in which the Church that uses the Prayer Book could be sterner, and therefore ultimately kinder, to the hypocrite. There

is, let us admit it, too little discipline in our Church. Our Prayer Book lays before us the Christian way. If we fail to follow it, the Church does not impose sanctions. There is, it is true, provision for the excommunication of "notorious evil livers," but that provision is seldom invoked. There may be a value in this. It puts it right up to us. Even though we fail our Lord, we may escape rebuke from our bishop, our parish priest, and our Christian brothers. That, I suggest, may be placing a wonderful responsibility upon us. But it is a responsibility dangerously heavy for the weaker brethren.

Actually, this absence of discipline is no real part of the Prayer Book's plan for us. In the Communion Office the opening exhortation speaks of the discipline imposed upon offenders in the primitive Church. Then these words are added: "Until proper discipline is restored (which is much to be desired) . . ."

But it never was restored. And now, after centuries in which our laymen have been each his own spiritual judge, a discipline could never be restored merely by the action of the clergy. All law and government ultimately depends for its effectiveness upon the consent of the governed. When the people of the Church see that they

must accept the consequences of their faith in Christ, when they realize that we have been too easy-going, when they know how harmful it is for men and women to be allowed to remain in the Church without rebuke for their Christian failure, then only can we become a disciplined Church.

This will not protect us wholly from the hypocrites; they will conform to any discipline imposed upon them, while still remaining far from God in their souls. But the first dangerous steps towards hypocrisy could be made more difficult, and young people with an incipient weakness could be strengthened in the way of life.

III.

There are many people who would argue that the Prayer Book will fail to show us the Christian way because formalism is bound to be the result of a worship that is laid down in a book. In all honesty we may recognize that a Church which understands the need for forms may fall more easily into formalism than a church founded upon rebellion against form. But we have only to look at the life of the Quakers, the Christians who have taken the most extreme measures to free the life of the Spirit from the chains of form, to realize

that some form is unavoidable. There was a quaint formality in their "thee's" and "thou's," and even in their meetings, while they wait for the Spirit to move them to speech, the observer can detect a form in the seeming formlessness. Any study of art (to which worship is kin) will teach us that form is necessary in life.

Formalism is the distortion of what is good and necessary. We can understand how it happens. As children grow to maturity in our Church, they may, if their parents are only nominal Christians, and if their parish church life has no vigour, begin to feel in their hearts, "They do not mean what they are saying and doing. It is all a formality." Sometimes they are attracted by the formality. In a choir or servers' guild you sometimes find a young man who delights in "playing at Church." But more often, young people will be merely bored by church activity. They find it formal and want no part in it.

Sometimes the way in which our worship is conducted helps to create this sense of formalism. Of recent years, in my opinion, there has been a great improvement, but you can still hear all too often the "parsonic voice".

More serious than this, however, is the feeling that people may get that our worship has no effect

on our lives. I have tried to make clear throughout these chapters that the Prayer Book's plan is meant to touch our daily lives continually. Its message, because it is the Gospel message, has social, political, economic and moral consequences. But the question is, are we, the custodians of the Prayer Book, living as if it is irrelevant to the actual world we live in?

Our Anglican reticence may help to give that impression. Let me hasten to say that I am convinced that there is a great value in this reticence. Having attended prayer meetings and listened to many "testimonies" I have found that unreality and a certain tawdriness can creep into the story of one's personal experience when it is repeatedly told. There is in many Anglicans a feeling of reverence which makes them unwilling to parade the deep ways of God with the soul. I am sure that this is a true instinct, provided that we always remember that there may be a time when God will call upon us to open the doors of our inmost being for the sake of someone else. Our experience may be the only thing that will lead that other person to know what God can do for him.

And meanwhile, let us recognize that reticence can be carried too far. You see a man in church Sunday by Sunday, but in your week-day contacts

with him he gives no sign of what his Church means to him. Frequently, we think that certain acquaintances are decent people, but only formal and nominal Christians. I am continually being surprised when by chance I am given a glimpse of the real thoughts of such people, for I find that a life of prayer is sustaining them in heroic struggles for virtue and is creating in them the sensitive conscience of the follower of Christ. Surely we need not be hypocrites-in-reverse, and pretend to the world that we are worse than we are!

There is one further reason why formalism can creep in to destroy the Christian spirit. There is always a danger of becoming professional Christians. Sometimes the clergy and people of a parish are so busy organizing and expressing the parish life that they forget its purpose — the souls for whom Christ died. A professional slickness can become the chief feature of our Services. The music is perfectly produced, the ceremony is faultless, the sermon is interesting; but it has ceased to be worship.

How can we use our Prayer Books, together in Church and alone in our study, so that the impression of formality disappears? First, we must do all we can to make sure that the Prayer Book

is known and understood. If people think that its worship is formal, they cannot really have listened to its words. Its deep sincerity would reach them if they studied it. Then secondly, clergy and people need to work to bring into our Church Services the atmosphere of true devotion. I have spoken about professional slickness in conducting them, but slovenliness is just as deadly. How stubbornly we cling to bad habits in our worship, insisting on showy ceremonies which have no meaning and sentimental hymns which smother us in cheap emotion! It need not be thus. Once an elderly woman, a member of the United Church, who, while still loyal to her own Church, found it convenient to attend ours, showed me that the worship of the Prayer Book had reached her soul. "I like to come to this church," she said. "I feel that God is here."

Above all else, it is our privilege to end this suspicion of unreality by the lives we live. The best advertisement for the Prayer Book is the Prayer Book Christian. Men like George Herbert, Lancelot Andrewes, Charles Simeon and John Keble are proof that here is a school for saints. "Grant, O Lord, that as we move out into the world of men, they may take knowledge of us that we have been with thy Son, Jesus Christ."

One last question must be asked. How can men and women be restored to the Prayer Book way? Whatever the cause of its failure to work for them, they need to be recalled to its way of life. They need to be converted. They need to be turned, so that once again they may find themselves with their Saviour, walking with Him towards heaven.

Therefore the Church is always faced with the task of evangelism. When the bishop ordains a priest, he exhorts him to "seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever". In the Litany we pray, "that it may please thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived. The sinner and the lost are often in the prayers of the Prayer Book. If we are to use those prayers, we must be a Church with an outreach, a Church that loves men and women and seeks them in Christ's name. To be a Prayer Book Christian means that the neighbour down the street, who has family troubles and is embittered and unhappy, will be the object of our loving concern. Our methods for reaching him may not be those of the professional evangelist, but we shall be trying to reach him and help him. Ten-

derly, with full respect for his personality, with decent reticence yet with Christian determination, our souls will go out to him. He will be in our prayers and our thoughts, and God will show us what we can do for him.

It was my privilege to work in a parish for twenty-one years, so that I was able to see what happened over the years to the children who through Baptism were brought into the Prayer Book Way. A distressing number of them wandered away in their late teens and early twenties, and seemed to be lost to the Church. We have already discussed this in our chapter on Confirmation. But something needs to be added. This falling away is not always permanent. Many times I have had the happy experience of welcoming these young people back to a vigorous Church life, after a lapse of ten or fifteen years. It seems to happen when they marry and begin to have children of their own. They bring them to Baptism and later to Sunday School, and before long their children have been the agents for restoring them to the Church. The religion of the Prayer Book was in their bones, and they could not wholly get rid of it. They were lost—but they are found again. This return seldom takes the form of an experience of sudden conversion. It is gradual and

quite undramatic. But is a real return to the Christian Way. Now I am not suggesting that this is a satisfactory situation; it is certainly not what the Prayer Book desires. The loss of ten or twenty year of Christian fellowship is serious and we should not rest content with it. But this return, on the part of so many, is a significant sign of the thoroughness of Christian training received by those who grow up in the Prayer Book Way.

If you have read thus far, and feel that I have been an unskilful interpreter of the Prayer Book, I can only ask you to go to the book and let it speak for itself. Whatever I have said about it has been said in honest affection for a book that I began to study when I was a choir boy, bored by the sermon, and fascinated by the tables for finding the date of Easter. "When we consider," says William Addison, "to what fanaticism and extravagance the religious spirit is prone, we must thank God continually for this beloved book. Let the parson's private opinions and prejudices be what they may, the beautiful and inspiring words of the Prayer Book renew the Church's message in the hearts of her people Sunday by Sunday. In times of religious excitement they make for calm and moderation, in times of laxity they strengthen the weakened spirit."

This moderation should not deceive us. It does not mean lukewarmness. It is the moderation of the man who from his earliest days has heard of God's love and learned his eternal destiny. It is the moderation of the man who knows his brothers of the Church and knows his God. It is the moderation of the man who does not need exciting tests of Christ's power every day. For he is living in that power, and his only mistrust is in himself and his pride. His daily prayers, matched by his life, find their inspiration and direction in the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed, all that he asks of God may be summed up in a prayer from that book:

“Let thy Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness, all our days: that when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope; in favour with thee our God, and in perfect charity with all men.”

THE END

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